

AN IMPARTIAL AND SUCCINCT
HISTORY
OF THE
RISE, DECLENSION, AND REVIVAL
OF THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST;
FROM
THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR
TO
THE PRESENT TIME.
WITH
FAITHFUL CHARACTERS OF THE PRINCIPAL PER-
SONAGES, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

BY THE
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IN THREE VOLUMES.
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P R E F A C E.

THE great design of the adorable Redeemer when he came down from Heaven, was to procure peace upon earth, and good-will towards men. To correspond with this desirable and blessed purpose is the great end and object of this History; particularly, amidst the various denominations into which the Christian world is divided, to unite in one holy bond of love, all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, without any consideration of the country they may occupy, the forms of church government they have embraced, or the unessential differences in religious opinions, which through the present infirmity of intellect, or the prejudices of education, they may have imbibed. The true Church has but one head, even Christ; and we are all members one of another. It will

be a better proof of our genuine Christianity, infinitely more conduce to the spread of the Gospel, and tend unspeakably more to the edification of our own souls, to love one another out of a pure heart fervently, and to bear and forbear with each other in subordinate matters, than to contend for systems, or exclusive establishments.

It is impossible to doubt the excellence, to dispute the ability, to question the learning, or impeach the purity of many, who have demonstrated the genuineness of their faith and hope under all our different modes of religious profession, the Papists themselves not excepted. And if the great Head of the Church will not exclude them from his kingdom and glory, and we are bound to hope that we shall meet, and be joined together in one holy fellowship through a blessed eternity, how powerfully does this call upon us to cultivate a greater enlargement of heart towards all the holy brethren ! We leave to bigots, and the unblest,

unblest, to execrate, excommunicate, and unchristianize every man that gathers not with them, and dares to differ a hair's breadth from their dogmas or decisions. But if the spirit of love and of a sound mind, has truly taken possession of our bosoms, we shall feel too much of the blessedness of the temper itself to suffer unhallowed encroachments thereon. We shall watch every avenue of the heart, at which bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking would enter, to disturb the repose of our own souls, and to trouble our brethren; and shall exemplify the character of the elect of God, holy, and beloved, by putting on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering. These will always carry irresistible evidence to the conscience, that we have been truly baptised into Christ, and have put on Christ. Whilst if any man hath not *this spirit of Christ*, whatever else he may conceit he possesses, assuredly HE IS NONE OF HIS. It is my wish and prayer therefore whilst the truth

is to be fought with impartiality, that the heart may be enlarged in charity, and ennobled with love, without dissimulation; for if we have the head and tongue of men or of angels, and have not this divine temper in exercise, we should be but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. These are truths which can never be too deeply impressed on the conscience, and inculcated by all who are true Churchmen. And I pray God, that whoever reads the following pages may grow more into this disposition, and look up to Him who giveth man knowledge, that every fresh acquirement may be accompanied with an equal measure of fidelity, devotedness and love to God our Saviour, and to every soul redeemed by his most precious blood, whether in circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.

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AN
IMPARTIAL HISTORY
OF THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST.

CENT. V. PERIOD II.
FROM THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UNIFORMITY BY
THEODOSIUS—TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
REFORMATION.

THE establishment of Christianity under Theodosius, and the uniformity enforced by his decrees, seemed to have placed the CATHOLIC CHURCH on the summit of eminence. This added to all the wealth poured into it, and the patronage now enjoyed, cast a glare of splendor around it, which might lead an inattentive spectator to reverence this establishment as a glorious Church ; but corruption already preyed on the vitals. The name prevailed, but the glory was departed. The profession of Christianity had become general, but the

power of it was nearly lost. Ambition, pride, luxury, and all the legions of evils engendered by wealth and power, lodged in her bosom. Heresies, contentions, schisms, rent her garments, and discovered her nakedness: whilst every hand grasping at pre-eminence, fought their own exaltation, instead of in honour preferring one another, and in meekness instructing those who opposed themselves: the victors, as well as the vanquished, afforded an humiliating spectacle of the absence of all divine principle and influence.

The divided empire began to fall in pieces, and to be crushed by its own weight; whilst the feeble hands which grasped the trembling sceptre, scarcely defended the tottering throne on which they were seated. We are now sinking into gothic barbarism, ecclesiastical usurpation, monkery triumphant, and the profession of Christianity buried under frauds, follies, ceremonies, and all kinds of the most ridiculous and debasing superstitions. I feel myself, like the adventurous traveller, entering the burning soil of Afric, surrounded with desolation, whirlwinds, moving pillars of sand, and wide spreading barrenness; and stretching his eager eyes over the waste, to catch a rising tree, or a verdant spot, which may afford a resting place for his weary feet, and a welcome fountain to cool his parched tongue.

CHAP. I.

CALAMITIES AFFLICTING THE CHURCH.

AN. 395. **T**HE vast empire of Rome was now divided into two parts, Arcadius reigned at Constantinople, and Honorius at Ravenna, who had preferred it to Rome for the capital of the West. Weak and feeble princes. Under AN. 400. the latter, the Goths began their ravages in the West, continuing their incursions till the final destruction of the empire. These were a swarm from the northern hive of barbarians, called by Selden, the *Officina Gentium*, under the various names of Goths, Ostrogoths, Vandals, Suevi, Alans, Franks, Burgundians. The desolations which these terrible invaders spread AN. 407. were inconceivable. War of such a predatory kind, itself must be abundantly dreadful ; but from these, it was peculiarly destructive to all who professed the Catholic faith. The barbarous tribes were in general idolaters, ignorant, warlike, living only by the sword. Those among them, (as was the case of many) who had imbibed any thing called Christianity, had chiefly received

it from the Arians, whom the severity of the Theodosian establishment had compelled to take refuge among the northern barbarians, and who had converted them to *their* Christianity. In consequence, the first irruptions of these savage conquerors were marked with especial fury against the Catholic profession. The Pagans in the several countries, who remained, seized the occasion to stimulate their heathen brethren to avenge their wrongs on the Christians; and wherever the Arian conquerors came, their persecutions of the Nicene believers retaliated severely all the evils which they had themselves suffered. Though I give not implicit credit to the report of Victor in Africa, yet the devastations there were great, and the massacres of the faithful inhuman. Gaul and Spain were deluged with these barbarians; and Genseric passing into Africa, every where marked his way with blood. The bishops, who confessed the true divinity of Christ, were tortured, maimed, banished or massacred, and their churches levelled with the ground. AN. 429.

In the East, the Persian monarchs exercised similar severities, by whatever cause provoked, and threatened the extinction of the Christian name. Whilst even where the Roman dominion still subsisted, the bitterness and enmity between the Orthodox and Heretics, supplied the place of Pagan adver-

adversaries ; and the contests for the greater bishoprics, at Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and other cities, exhibited the scandalous conflicts of men professing the peaceable religion of Christ, and murdering one another in support of the ambitious candidates, who disputed the several sees with envenomed rage, mutual excommunications, and torrents of blood. How deplorable the state of the Church must have been, amidst these ravages without and within, is hardly to be conceived : whilst ignorance and superstition advanced with gigantic strides, as truth and knowledge of the Scriptures were extinguishing.

The Pagan system, indeed, was nearly destroyed in the western empire, though some symptoms of it yet remained ; and the impure rites of the Saturnalia, and Lupercalia, continued to be celebrated ; too congenial with human depraved appetite to be wholly abandoned : but fresh edicts restrained them, and in the East the younger Theodosius completed the conversion of Pagan temples to the worship of the true God, and purged his army and magistrature from every remnant of the Polytheists : a few sophists only remained to fan the expiring flame. But the East escaped not the ra-

vages of northern barbarians. The Huns

AN. 429. cruelly invaded and plundered Thrace and its confines ; the Vandals, Africa ;

whilst the Goths poured as a deluge on the West. There, at last, after the sackage of Rome, returning to the charge, Italy fell, with its capital, into the hands of Odoacer : and hardly began
AN. 476. to breathe under a settled government, before a new horde of Ostrogoths sup-
AN. 493. planted their fellows. Under Theodoric their leader, they conquered Odoacer, and after various battles, seized the disputed throne. The miseries of the Church during those conflicts were terrible ; nor could such accessions as were made, be any compensation for the losses sustained. Even the conquerors, when they assumed the profession of Christianity with whole nations and armies baptised at the instigation, and following the example of their monarchs, only changed one superstition for another, and seem as much heathens nearly as before. Such were the Franks under Clovis, persuaded by his wife to embrace her religion, and baptised by Remigius, bishop of Rheims, with all his court. The history of the sacred vial, but lately broken in France, is a proof of the ignorance on one side, and the knavery on the other ; and forbids me to entertain any higher opinion of the Christianity of Remigius, than of his Catechumen Clovis. AN. 496.

AN. 449. The Saxons must not be forgotten—
invited to assist the helpless Britons to expel their
northern

northern foes, they seized the kingdom which they were called to defend; inhumanly ravaged the country, destroyed the churches and monasteries, and drove the poor remains of the Christian inhabitants into the mountains of Wales, and the peninsula of Cornwall.

Desolations spread on every side: but though the hail fell thus from Heaven, men repented not of their wickedness, and the Church grew more corrupt than ever, both in doctrine and practice.

I am tracing the Christian Church through the wilderness—there I see the carcases of the rebels in abundance strewn the plain—and I am searching out the few Calebs and Joshuas, without whom, she had been made as Sodom, and been like unto Gomorrah.

I hardly need mention some attempts of the Jews, which, though mischievous, shewed only for a little while, their impotent malice against the Christian name.

CHAP. II.

INTERNAL DISSENSIONS AND HERESIES.

THE imperial establishment of uniformity, was far from procuring the peace of the Church, or if we may judge by experience, from advancing its spiritual prosperity. The Church indeed became vast in extent. The wings of the temple were stretched out wider and farther, and gold and precious stones, and gorgeous robes, decked the central sanctuary at Rome and Constantinople, but the divine inhabitant was fled.

AN. 411. The heresies before recorded still subsisted. The Manichæans continued to disperse their wild opinions, of the two original principles of good and evil. The Novatians, Meletians, Marcionites, and others existed, though much reduced in numbers. But the Donatists, particularly in Africa, seem to have gained a strong interest: as they were able in a synod, where Augustin was victorious, to muster two hundred and seventy-nine bishops of that persuasion. A proof how small those African dioceses must have been, when more than six hundred prelates assembled on that occasion.

sion. The pen, and preaching of Augustin, thinned their ranks; and I wish these had been the only weapons he had wielded. I must condemn, because I believe it both unscriptural, and a sign of weakness in any dispute, where the secular arm is called in to inflict pains and penalties for opinions. Many returned to the Church from conviction; more from terror of punishment; and the others were cruelly treated, banished, or murdered. I see no shadow of such conduct allowed in the Gospel word. Vindicate this whoever will, my poor suffrage must be against such proceedings. They would have made me a Donatist, rather than an Augustinian.

The Arians still subsisted, and spread their pernicious tenets, however held down by the strong arm of power, and hunted out by the orthodox under the Grecian Empire. Many were banished; but they carried with them opinions, held with greater tenacity, because of the sufferings which they had brought upon them; and taught with greater zeal among the barbarians, where they had taken refuge. They had under the northern ravagers, whose consciences they directed, a fair opportunity of avenging the injuries which they had suffered; and they were too little Christians to neglect it. Their arm fell heavy upon the orthodox, whom they conquered, especially in Africa; and

and they pleaded in their vindication, the example which had been set them by the Theodosian establishment. Banishment, expulsion, and plunder, were the penalties they inflicted, and often death itself. Augustin died during a siege, when these Vandal Christians attacked, and subdued his diocese and Africa. AN. 430.

I may not here pass over a very disputed fact of Arian cruelty, and Catholic orthodoxy vindicated by a miracle; even the enabling those Christians, whose tongues were plucked out by the roots, by the Vandal king, to recover and speak as plainly as ever in vindication of the deity of Christ. The historical testimonies of the fact are said to be respectable: but the spirit of the times, I must confess, forbids me to be credulous. I demur to the witnesses; I suspect fallacy in the examination; or falsehood in the fact. Pious frauds had found such vindicators in Ambrose, Jerome, and others, that it had become meritorious, to exalt orthodoxy by any means. Nor can I think the Christian cause gained any real force or evidence against Arianism hereby. I fear the difference between the Arian and Catholic Christians in general, in all that constitutes real Christianity, was very little in that day, and except the point of doctrine itself, respecting the essential deity of Christ, superstition, and all its degrading attendants among both, were pretty equally

equally diffeminated. The more I consult the book of God, and compare the Scripture miracles with these, the less reason I feel to admit such prodigies. The Athanasian creed needs them not, and no man ever was convinced of divine truth savingly by miracle.

AN. 429. But new heresies, the spawn of idle wanderings of imagination, and eastern subtleties, sprung up, to exercise the zeal and disputes of the watchful polemics. Nestorius and Eutyches, two men of good reputation, started a fresh subject for investigation, respecting *the nature* of Christ: and taking opposite sides, formed two great parties in the Church.

The incarnate God the orthodox church confessed, perfect God, and perfect man: but the mode of the *hypostatical union* of the divine and human nature, had not been so expressly defined. Apollinaris had denied Christ a human soul, and supposed that the divine nature supplied its place. Nestorius, a Syrian, and his followers, to be at the greatest distance from such an idea, suggested that Christ consisted of *two persons*. He refused Mary the title, which religious zeal had begun to give her, of Θεοτοκος the *mother of God*, and allowed her to be only the *mother of Christ*, χριστοτοκος, to whose human nature alone the title should apply. Cyril,
of

of Alexandria, denounced his anathemas against this new sentiment, which were repelled by the like, from Nestorius of Constantinople. The world was in a flame about a manner of expression, which probably had candour and gentleness been used, would easily have been adjusted and peace restored. The council of Ephesus declared the true faith to be, "one divine person, in whom both natures completely subsisted without confusion." It does not appear that the Nestorians were a hair's breadth from admitting this definition, if controversy had not exasperated the spirits of all parties, and prevented an amicable explication. Nestorius denied the consequences imputed to him, from refusing Mary the title of *mother of God*, and I think with the translator of Mosheim, that the term was neither scriptural nor innocent. Notwithstanding the condemnation of Nestorius, his sentiments were greatly propagated in the East, where still a large body of Christians remains of that denomination.

AN. 448—451. *Eutyches*, an abbot of Constantinople, adopted the opposite sentiment to Nestorius, and maintained that Christ had but "*one person and one nature, the incarnate word*." Hence he was accused of denying Christ's humanity, and as such excommunicated and deposed. A council assembled at Ephesus, admitted his explication of his

his sentiments, and exculpated him from heresy. But in an appeal to Rome, which Leo, *the great* in insolence and prelatical ambition, summoned another council at Chalcedon, to examine, Eutyches was condemned, banished, and degraded with Dioscurus of Alexandria, Cyril's successor in the see; and the president of the Ephesian council. Eutyches was absent, and not permitted to plead his own cause. Such was the violence and injustice of these wretched assemblies. Leo's letter was adopted as conveying the sense of the Catholic church, of *two distinct natures in one person*, without change, mixture, or confusion. But the decisions of the Chalcedon council widened the breach it should have healed. The followers of Eutyches explained, and persisted in the *unity of the nature*, though they admitted it twofold and *compounded*. Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople, wishing to moderate and reconcile all parties, engaged the Emperor Zeno to publish a decree of union, in order to heal the differences if possible, between all the contending parties. But the Roman pontiff Felix, struggling for supremacy, seized this occasion to assemble a new council at Rome, to confirm the statutes of Chalcedon, and excommunicated the patriarch of Constantinople. Hence a fresh schism, and ground of quarrel arose. Some bishops siding with Rome, and others with Constantinople:

stantinople: and thus the division between the Greek and Latin churches was widened. AN. 482.

It does not appear that Nestorius or Eutyches denied the godhead and glory of Christ, or the real atonement made by him on the cross: but it was the miserable temper of those times to be searching Plato and Aristotle, for subtleties of explication, and as soon as a new idea was started, it was made the subject of solemn controversy. The bishops delighted in these wretched councils, where their polemic powers were to be displayed, and their influence encreased: and thus where gentleness and a peaceable spirit might have healed, disputes and anathemas liberally hurled at each other, widened the breach into irreconcilable enmity, and drove many farther from the truth than they really meant to go; and made verbal controversies, mortal errors.

But there is one heresy yet to be taken notice of, which broached in that day, and fostered, has continued to spread its fatal influence, and may be reckoned among the most deadly weeds that have grown up in the garden of the Church, *pelagianism* in all its ramifications.

AN. 411. This heresy derives its name from Pelagius, a Briton, who with Celestius a Scot, first propagated

propagated it at Rome. And being driven by the gothic invasion into Africa, carried their erroneous doctrines to Carthage, where they spread, and wakened up all the zeal and powers of Augustin to suppress them. The radical principles of this heresiarch went to the destruction of the fundamental doctrines of revealed religion, a *vicarious atonement*, and *divine influence*. He denied the corruption of human nature, or any imputation of sin from the first man—affirmed that every person is born as pure as Adam—that sin is only the imitating Adam's transgression—that nothing is necessary to human perfection, but the exertion of our native faculties—That every man who does evil, has it wholly in his own power to repent and amend—that the human will is as free to good as to evil, and requires no supernatural aid.—That an infant needs no remission of sins—and that our works are meritorious of salvation.

AN. 417. PELAGIUS is admitted to be a man of irreproachable character; an able and subtle disputant. Attacked by the Bishop of Hippo, he secured the favour of the patriarch of Jerusalem; justified himself at an assembly of bishops, held in that city; and afterwards at Diospolis. And when at first the controversy was carried to Rome, Zosimus the Pope, pronounced in his favour; either seduced by the subtleties of Pelagius, or ignorant of the importance

portance of the matter in dispute. Augustin, however, and his associates demurred to the Roman decision; continued to challenge further enquiry; and at last prevailed upon the yet not infallible Bishop of Rome, to change his opinion, and condemn the heretic. This being accompanied with the acute pen of Augustin, and the bitterness of Jerome; and effectually seconded by the imperial penalties and punishments, suppressed for a while the spreading contagion. But a new modification of the doctrine under Cassian, a monk, at Marseilles, revived, and diffused more abundantly the pleasing poison, too congenial to the pride of human nature, not to find numerous advocates. Cassian softened down some of the most revolting sentiments against revelation, by admitting that though every man had power to *commence* repentance without divine preventing grace, merely by the calls of the word, no man could *persevere* without it. He denied, that in consequence of any predestination, divine grace was given to one more than another—affirmed that Christ died alike, and equally for all men—That the same grace necessary for salvation, purchased by him, was alike offered to all men—That a man without grace was capable of faith and holy desires—That every man was born in a state of perfect freedom of will, equally capable of resisting the influences of grace, as of complying with its suggestions.

This

This modification of Pelagius' doctrine, or semi-pelagianism, spread through all the western and eastern churches. It suited the spirit of proud unhumiliated man; and many who did not think it prudent to avow *all* the Pelagian sentiments, secretly favoured Cassian's opinions. The fatal effects have reached our own times. It is the religion of the unawakened conscience, and will not be vanquished by any weapons of earthly temper.

Augustin brought forth all his artillery, and nobly defended the doctrines of grace, in many a laboured treatise, which I may not enter upon; because others abundantly more powerful have been produced, than his, or Prosper's, his best associate. Austin himself seems to have been mistaken in some very principal points. His notions of the effect of baptism are highly unscriptural. He every where puts *sanctification* in the place of *justification*: and he mingles with what is excellent, so many monkish follies and superstitions, that I must repeat my former suggestion, how much better helps we have for the discovery of Christian truth, than are to be found in the best of the fathers. Who that hath read Luther on the Galatians, Calvin's Institutes, Edwards on Free-will, and a host of moderns, would prefer Austin, or Prosper? But I confess my astonishment at Mr. Milner's assertion, "that the doctrine of *particular redemption* was un-

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“ known to the antients, and he wishes it had remained equally unknown to the moderns.” I am shocked that the Scriptures of truth should be treated thus slightly ; or the greatest and best of men be laid under so unbecoming a censure. The grand point Augustin maintains, is *the necessity of divine grace in order to salvation*—that there is an *eternal purpose of God, or predestination*, with regard to those who shall be saved—and that they and *only they*, will finally obtain it. These truths have from the beginning been charged with contradictions, and branded with severe uncharitableness, but an awakened conscience, a humbled spirit, and a divinely enlightened heart will not perceive them. I mean not to enter into the defence of these doctrines, whilst I profess my belief in them. I will leave it to experience to demonstrate, that they who are *particularly redeemed* will be the very persons who feel themselves bound by every tie of love and duty to glorify Christ in their bodies, and in their spirits which are his ; and thus display a more enlarged measure of real holiness in temper and practice, than ever was or ever can be attained on any other principles, or by any other means than those which the Spirit of God hath provided.

CHAP. III.

ON THE CHURCH GOVERNMENT, RITES, CEREMONIES AND DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS.

AN. **T**HE Emperor was as yet acknowledged
451. supreme. He deposed and turned out the bishops, or put them in as he pleased : and his influence when exerted, hitherto met little or no resistance in nominating to the important sees. Constantinople the seat of his residence was raised to peculiar dignity. The Bishop of Rome grew jealous, and using all his wiles, contended for the supremacy. The East chiefly acknowledged the one, the West the other ; but each missed no opportunity of enlarging their jurisdiction, and encroaching upon their rival, liberally dealing out their mutual anathemas. The Bishop of Jerusalem aspired after his ancient honours, and gained the patriarchate of the Palestines. The great patriarchs now assumed the sole right of consecrating bishops in their province : convened yearly synods ; encouraged appeals to their courts of judicature ; and received complaints against their prelates. But the Emperor as supreme, and general councils in-

terposed to check the patriarchal abuses. To extend their authority the patriarchs endeavoured to attach the monks; protected them against their bishops; excited disputes between the prelates, and fought to draw all power to themselves; whilst each laboured to extend the bounds of their own jurisdiction at the expence of their neighbours. Rome especially received applications with avidity; and by a politic profession of being the protectrice of the oppressed, drew appeals in abundance to her tribunal. By a well regulated system of craft and encroachment she continued to rise in the scale of

eminence. To this scarce any bishop con-
AN. 457. tributed more than the ambitious Leo.

Nor did the vices of the clergy lessen the reverence paid to them by the ignorant and superstitious. The impudence of Martyn, Bishop of Tours is particular, who maintained at an imperial entertainment, that a presbyter was superior to an emperor. The false piety of miserable devotees had made the function of the clergy a very desirable thing; and introduced a horde of idle and vicious men into the church, among whom saints sprung up as mushrooms: and to these the stupid vulgar looked up, as to the highly favoured of the deity.

The monks, like clouds of locusts, covered the face of the earth; and regimented under diverse leaders, served to support the dignity of the Church,
and

and to afford from their body, a most abundant supply for the vacant fees. Convents multiplied throughout the Christian world; vaunted by the spirit of the times, as among the most meritorious of deeds.

A multitude of authors, whose works still exist, though in dust, flourished; but highly renowned as they were in their day, scarcely attracting notice in ours. Even Theodoret and Austin will hardly be ever consulted, as commentators upon Scripture. Nor do I know a single individual to whom now a reference would be made. So transcendently superior is modern criticism, in clearness of exposition, evangelical doctrine, and practical improvement. All the works of that age are clouded with puerilities and superstitions: which last plentifully increased. Departed spirits rose into veneration; their images began to be held sacred. A fancied immediate presence of the saint was supposed to be attached to some of them: and false miracles consecrated their deification. The merit of visiting the tombs of martyrs, and pilgrimages to other famed places grew into a thousand abuses; and relics were esteemed a sovereign cure for diseases of body or mind; for driving away devils, and a charm against every human misery. The Bishop of Rome among the first, encouraged this lucrative trade, and himself dispersed these wonder-

ful favours to the deluded multitude. In aid of all the nostrums invented to quiet men's consciences in this life, the purgatorial fire, adopted from the heathen, came in aid, to save them in the next; and as the clergy claimed the most ample power of regulating its severity, or terminating its duration, the deceived crowd were eager to procure their help to alleviate their expected sufferings, or to shorten the years of their torment.

Affecting the most sublime attainments of perfection, the *mystics*, before mentioned, drew the gaping crowd to admire their self-inflicted austerities. Under pretence of exalting the spirit to higher communion with God, by fasting and macerations, and exposition to all the inclemencies of the sky, like the Jogis of the East, from whom probably this folly derived its origin, men stood on pillars, immoveable, for years together, and there expired. Among these Simeon Stylytes acquired peculiar glory, by raising his pillars from six to forty cubits high, and there exhibiting his wonderful sanctity to the admiration, and almost adoration, of the gazing multitude. Against these and the like abuses, so much in vogue, one man, named Vigilantius, a presbyter, is said to have remonstrated. His zeal against the rage for relics and the rising idolatry, provoked the irascible Jerome. This monkish patron of the prevailing superstitions,

perstitutions, so violently assaulted the impertinent reformer, that he was glad to purchase his safety by his silence.

The ceremonies of the Church grew in proportion, as the life of religion was lost. The clergy failed not to make themselves important ; and the ignorance of the times, and the established superstitions regarded *them*, as only capable of approaching the Deity, and obtaining favourable responses from him. A pomp of worship, garments, utensils, altars, awed the vulgar into reverence ; and a round of perpetual bawling services, night and day, kept up the semblance of fervent devotion. The churches were loaded with finery, and the Nestorian controversy introduced Mary, with her Son, in the first and most conspicuous place of the orthodox sanctuary. Solid silver encased and enshrined the rotten bones, bodies, and relics of the saints. The *public penance* was now cunningly dispensed with, and *private confession to a priest* substituted in its stead. And thus to receive absolution, was as convenient for the culprit, as it gave importance to the ghostly father.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

BUT where, amidst error, superstition, and prevailing ungodliness, is the true Church to be found? I answer, among a few, who still held the head Christ, and continued to worship him in spirit and in truth: but, I confess, on viewing the various parts of the Church, I hardly know where to fix for preference. All seem to have corrupted their ways. The greater ecclesiastics appear too ambitious and contentious for truth's lowly dwelling. I cannot look for real religion in a Leo, a Felix, or Dioscurus: nor can I hope to find it among the Pelagians, who deny the influences of divine grace, however specious their plea or appearance. The Arians furnish as violent and bitter a spirit, as they shew a radical error in doctrine. Shall I search the convents? Perhaps an individual may be found, a singular exception to the general rule. Shall I gaze upon the pillared saints, or the solitaries of the desert? They will afford nothing which can answer my criterion of pure religion. Yet I shall not doubt but the Lord had a people throughout the world. Augustin

gustin was evidently a bright and shining light among the men of that generation : in conduct exemplary, as sound in faith, and zealous for its purity. We hear of four hundred and forty-six bishops assembled with him in Africa, then apparently the garden of the Church. These, many of them at least, may be supposed men of like minds with himself : and the small flocks, occupying their care, and under their immediate superintendence, blest by their labours. Their situation in life was probably such as Ammianus before described it, indigent, devout, simple, like the people to whom they ministered, and with whom much of the power of godliness yet rested. And, no doubt, in other parts of the empire, many resembling these were found, far from the greater sees, the constant objects of ambition and avarice, and distant from the councils of polemic bitterness and contention : men who holding the faithful word, shunned unprofitable disputes, intent on the edification of their flocks, in the knowledge which is after godliness.

The labours of St. Patrick in Ireland, were said to be attended with such effects on that wild people, as to give hope that something better than nominal Christianity was produced. It must be acknowledged, however, that the legendary tales of these popish Apostles are to be heard with much hesitation,

hesitation, and the arch-bishoprics bestowed as their rewards, render their motives as suspected as their reports were exaggerated. Whether the metropolitan of Armagh was a real saint of God, is not a little problematical.

But not among the Catholics only would I seek the true Church; with the reputed heretics also, I shall expect to find men of a right spirit, and truly devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the hasty anathemas denounced against them. The Novatians were still a body subsisting under holy bishops. Nor can I doubt that the Nestorians, at least many of them, were partakers of the grace of God in truth, as their fervent zeal to spread the Gospel of Christ strongly demonstrated. Indeed, the very disputes themselves, however to be lamented and condemned, would excite some to more careful examination of the Scripture, to watchfulness and prayer: and whilst the disputants themselves confessed the incarnate God, and faith in his vicarious atonement, however they differed in the explication of inferior points of doctrine, we may hope their errors might not be fatal.

The grievous sufferings also of many, through the incursions of the Barbarians, or the savageness of Arian persecutors, could not but greatly tend to awaken in their minds deeper views of eternal things,

things, and drive the faithful to seek their rest in the great Shepherd of Israel, and in waiting for his salvation : whilst those who yielded their bodies to stripes, imprisonment and death itself, for the preservation of a good conscience, gave the most unequivocal evidence, that they acted under a divine principle, and knew in whom they had believed.

It must be admitted by those who know the word of God, and the nature of true Christianity, that amidst its most extensive spread, among *the many called*, there never were but *few chosen* : not to advert to the growing superstitions, and the wretched mode of baptising whole nations ; even where the best teachers, and the greatest truth remained, the multitudes were only *in* the Church, but not *of* the Church, united by an outward profession indeed, but never joined to the Lord in one spirit. The state of things at that time nearly resembled the present. The greater dignitaries of the Church too much men of this world ; the inferior clergy under their influence, and chusing the ministry for its advantages, or an idle life : and the people like their priests, easily engaged in the pageantry of rites, ceremonies, and superstitious observances ; though a generation was preserved, who cleaved to the Lord, in one faith, and served him out of a pure heart fervently.

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The doctrines of truth, with the same creeds, which we subscribe, were the avowed faith of the orthodox, whatever unhallowed superstitions were added to the ritual, and however prevalent the Arian heresy might be, and the equally deadly, though more plausible doctrines of Pelagianism. These last, indeed, sapped the vitals of Christianity. Instead of a sinner lying at the foot of the Cross, to seek pardon and peace through atoning blood, the pride of self-sufficiency, and the vain conceit of attaining personal perfection by innate human ability, rendered the sacrifice of Christ useless, and the Spirit of God, and all his operations unnecessary. Whoever is capable of saving himself will not need nor desire to be indebted to another: But a generation remained according to the election of grace, such as Augustin describes, who had not so learned Christ, but lived in humble dependence on his atonement, and expected to receive, and were actually blessed with experimental influence from the Spirit of all grace, which God, our father in Christ, ever promised to give to those who ask him. I can esteem none in any age, as worthy the name of Christians, but those who being baptised into Christ, have received the Spirit of Christ, and put on Christ. Such I discover in that day, chosen, and called, and faithful; *few* indeed, and of small reputation: but does any *real Christian*, in any age or place, expect to find more?

CHAP.

CENTURY VI.

CHAP. I.

THE GENERAL STATE OF THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

WE are descending into the regions of darkness, and the shadow of death; where scarce a ray of truth casts its feeble glimmerings to light the benighted traveller on his way to the celestial city. The progress of barbarism advanced rapidly. Goths and Vandals reigned. The emperors of the East, Anastasius and Justin, exerted ineffectual efforts to stop their ravages. The very struggles to resist the invaders, increased the miseries of mankind. A momentary triumph
AN. 534. of Justinian, by Belisarius in Africa, and
AN. 553. Narses in Italy, was succeeded by fresh
AN. 568. swarms of Lombards, who fixed their
empire over the degenerate Romans, and ruled them with a rod of iron. Yet the conquerors themselves, by degrees melted down into the same mass with the vanquished, adopted their religion, and exchanged the ritual of Heathenism for Christianity; from which its features were now scarcely to be distinguished. Wonderous and wretched conversions of whole nations, Germans, Gauls, Britons, increased the fame of the monkish apostles, who

who ministred baptism to them by thousands; where a queen was gained, and a complaisant monarch yielded to her solicitations, and ordered the conversion of his subjects. Left in all their former savageness of manners, licentiousness, and ignorance, the repetition of a formula taught them, and the sign of the cross, admitted them with facility within the Church's pale: except the change of names, little perceptible difference appeared between the Christian converts and the Pagan; for, to facilitate the means of their conversion, the great Gregory of Rome, had expressly granted authority, as we have seen, to enjoy the same indulgences at the tombs and shrines of martyrs and confessors, as had been usual in the temples of their former deities, with all the sports and pastimes attendant on these festivities: only the images of the Virgin and her Son, of apostles and saints, were worshipped instead of Thor and Friga.

Miracles multiplied under such apostles and such an auditory; and produced as rapid conversions, as admiration, nay, almost adoration, of the sacerdotal order, who were invested with this high privilege. It would be hardly needful to enter into the detection of the frauds to which Papists themselves are now ashamed to give credit; or the falsehood of miracles wrought by men, little scrupulous about the means of deceit, provided they
advanced,

advanced, what they called the interests of Christianity, and their own importance; and got endowments for churches and monasteries. Mosheim infers the fraud of these prodigies, because they produced no real obedience to the doctrines and laws of the Gospel; which indeed real miracles could have no more done than pretended ones. Converts of this kind could add very little to the Church, any more than the Jews, compelled to confess Christ by the power of Justinian, or baptised under the sword of Childeric. In these zealous exertions, Gaul and Spain stand peculiarly eminent. But all the power of monarchs, and all the wiles of false apostles, hardly replenished the ravages made by the Saxons in Britain, the Lombards in Italy, and the Huns in Thrace and Greece. In Persia the desolations were still more dreadful under Chosroes, and reduced the profession of Christianity very low. So that the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, by Augustin, and his monks, of the Irish by Columbus, of the Alans, Lazi, Bohemians, and some savage hordes near the Euxine sea, added comparatively but little to the nominal fold, which had been wasted by war and the sword.

CHAP. II.

ON THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE NOMINAL
CHURCH.

HERE all is as dark and gloomy within as without inauspicious. Ignorance and superstition advanced with rapid strides, as the ravages spread on every side. And the greatest saints, even Pope Gregory, contributed to it, as much as the most stupid barbarians. His abhorrence of all pagan literature induced him to proscribe the noblest works of heathen antiquity, and to devote the writings of Livy, and other admired authors of ancient Rome to the flames. AN. 590.

The monks, now cloistered and separated from the rest of the world, preserved the little literature which remained in the western world. But covered with the thick darkness of bigotry and superstition, their labours are supposed to have done much more harm than good. As all truth and godliness were supposed to be drawn from the writings of the fathers, and all excellence to be comprised in the legendary lives of saints and martyrs, on them their first cares were exercised ; and in the great want of
paper

paper and parchment, many of the most precious and valuable remains of antiquity are said to have been erased, in order to give place to these paragons of piety and compilations. Indignation rises on reviewing these miserable compositions of conventual folly. And whilst we regret that men should be thus uselessly employed, we sigh for the destructions they have made, now forever irreparable.

AN. 552—539. Scarcely an author of that age (shall I except Boethius and Cassiodorus?) affords a treatise that we shall ever peruse for edification. Their commentaries on Scripture are wretched; either consisting of quotations ill-tacked together of the fathers and ancient doctors, called *catene*, chains: or the still highly esteemed allegorical interpretations, where all is visionary; perverted by the most absurd imaginations of fanciful superstition, or buried in hidden meanings and mysteries, which the more removed from the plain and common sense of mankind, appeared the more wonderful and profound. Whilst these were held up as the mirrors of *doctrine*; the models of *practice* were blazoned in the lives of the saints; and such saints! decked out in all the frippery of monkish fooleries and self-instituted services of voluntary humiliation, and atrocious mortifications of the

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body ; presented for the wonder, worship, and imitation of the ignorant ; and daubed all over with the lying miracles which fraud invented, and credulity admired.

With such tuition and such examples, real religion must have needs sunk to a very low ebb : yet astonishing to tell all these pretended to teach and lead to the summit of human perfection : and a thousand rules were prescribed for the more or less perfect, in order to elevate men to saintship and beatification ; the miserable delusions of pride and self-righteousness ; and tending to the utter subversion of the simplicity, which is in Christ. The Scriptures were forgotten, the one invariable guide to a holy conversation ; whilst all these self-instituted forms and follies were supposed to advance the Christian to a higher region of sanctity than the bible ever taught.

AN. 543. Among these multiplying orders of fanatic superstition, the Benedictines now arose, and grew into singular eminence under Benedict their founder. The professed object of their institute was to promote a spirit of superior piety : but that which engaged the patronage of Rome was the servile submission inculcated to her authority. These spread with amazing rapidity in the western world, attracted

tracted the reverence and spoils of deluded devotees; and soon wallowed in wealth and profligacy, like their monastic brethren who had preceded them.

Whilst the monks and visionaries were thus active on the one hand, the pagan philosophers, not yet extinct, on the other, attempted to put a new face on the old religion; and borrowing some of the features of Christianity, broached new and more plausible systems of heathenism; which amidst the great decay of true Christianity still found many abettors. Among these, Chalcidius was the most eminent, and so artfully wove together his philosophic, pagan and christian opinions, as to make it dubious to which of these he professionally belonged: though the decision is of little importance. He might take his choice, and be still the same man.

AN. 582. But the Church, however fallen in wisdom and purity, had made pretty considerable advances in pride and contention, at least the heads of religion, who arrogated that name to themselves; and liberally dealt out anathemas against all who presumed to doubt their decisions or dispute their pre-eminence. The title of *œcumenical*, conferred on John, the Faster, Bishop of Constantinople, roused the jealousy and mortified the pride of the Roman Pontiff, more anxious about these vain distinctions,

tinctions, than the life of godliness. The christian world was in a flame, respecting two worthless beings probably, who had power and artifice enough to influence all their prelatical partisans to espouse their quarrels, with the bitterness and bigotry that personal disputes and zeal for superiority naturally gender. Constantinople claimed equality with Rome universally, and supremacy over the East; but Gregory and Pelagius as stoutly asserted their superiority: and affected in right of their see, at least to be *primi inter pares*, on account of the eminence of their founders, Peter and Paul, with other arguments equally curious and conclusive. The eastern Church generally cleaved to Constantinople, the western to Rome: but whenever a prelate thought himself oppressed, he was sure to find a protector at Rome, whither his appeal was invited. And he failed not, as courtly parasites, who seek favour, usually do, to extol that jurisdiction, as derived from heaven, and that bishop as God's vicerent which decided in his favour. But such jurisdiction was despised at Constantinople: and even the Gothic barbarian monarchs still exercised their supremacy at Rome, and suffered none to fill the see but with their approbation; summoned councils by their authority, and judged the clergy at their tribunals. Nor had that encroaching see as yet dared to dispute the imperial dominion: but however reluctantly, submitted to an authority it was

was unable to resist. The fulminations afterwards so dreaded, had not hitherto been presumed to be hurled at Kings and Emperors.

The corrupt lives of the clergy bore a growing proportion to the wealth accumulated, the honours claimed by them, and the veneration paid to them. The imperial edicts and ecclesiastical canons preserve a record shameful to peruse of the prevailing abuses which called for such restraints. The bishops of Rome stand branded out of their own mouths by the mutual criminations of the contending candidates, for the holy see, with every thing detestable. At the close of the last century, Symmachus and Laurentius, by assassinations, massacres, and perpetual tumults, strove for the sacred tiara. Three councils assembled at Rome, were as unequal to quiet the disturbances as to determine the truth of the immoral and flagitious accusations alike forcibly urged by both parties against their antagonists, and probably equally true. However the papal chair was consigned by Theodoric to Symmachus, without any evidence of his having justified himself from the charges laid against him. Indeed impunity added to their presumption; the greatest crimes of the clergy seldom exposed them to the slightest correction. *Omnia Romæ venalia*, all things at Rome are on sale, was as true of Rome papal, as

pagan. Belisarius sold the fee to Silverius, for two hundred pounds of gold, and delivered Vigilius to his competitor, who soon made away with his rival.

AN. 536; With such wickedness in high places, what could be expected of their immediate dependants? Yet they contrived to maintain their dominion over the superstitious and ignorant people. Nor did any thing in their conduct prevent the multitude from lavishing their treasure to procure absolution, which these good men alone could grant, and the participation of the merits of departed saints and martyrs, which was only to be secured through their mediation, and instrumentality.

The merit of monkery, and of all who contributed to this unnatural seclusion, filled the world with convents, and the outward church with its most zealous defendants. This great army fought in one uniform cause their own privileges and those of the church to which they belonged.

Superstition now exalted to the throne, the power of religion was lost in the form, and the spirit of devotion in endless rites and ceremonies; which giving importance to the machinists, and increasing

creasing the horde of clergy, filled also their pockets with riches : for however greatly the *merit of good works* was vaunted to the people, the priests must be paid for their services. No penny, no mass. The *canon of the mass* now produced by the great Gregory, with all its pomp and fooleries, became more universally celebrated. Images of saints, and relics multiplied so immensely, that there were sometimes more bones of a saint than ever belonged to a human body ; and afterwards more pieces of the true cross than would have made a tree big enough for the two malefactors also. Purgatory kept up its lucrative trade. The merit any man wanted might be purchased by building churches and monasteries ; or maintaining communities of idle monks, fanatic or profligate ; or by interesting the dead on their behalf and buying a little of the superabundance of their merits. These the Church appropriating to herself, with the relics, ransacked even the oil of the lamps that burned at the tombs of the martyrs, and with great ceremony the Bishop of Rome disposed of this rich commodity, at no inconsiderable price : and sent it as the greatest present even to crowned heads. And no wonder, it being invested with celestial energy, to chase away the dæmons and evil spirits, and to heal alike the diseases of body and mind. Yet these high favours were not always granted. An application from the

Empress Constantina being made to St. Gregory, to obtain some relics of St. Peter or Paul, he refused : from the danger of approaching them : his predecessor having been troubled with dreadful visions for his presumption, at having only some of the plates touched which were near them. He tells her that an attempt to change something in the tomb of St. Lawrence, was punished with the death of the monks and churchwarden—that such precious relics as those of the Apostles themselves could not be given ; but a rag, which had approached their bodies would be sufficient to produce miraculous effects. However, as a great favour he promises her some filings of St. Peter's chain, incased in a key ; supposing the priest, who was authorised to touch this holy jewel, could file a few particles from it ; for the sacred file was endued with such miraculous powers, that it could only procure them for the worthy ; if used for others, it made no more impression than on a rock of adamant. We read and stand amazed at such fooleries, and still more to hear such a man blazoned by Mr. Milner for his “ eminent piety, integrity and humility.” The very names of new saints, festivals and litanies with the forms of consecration, would fill a folio, instead of meriting to blot a page. And what is ridiculous enough, the lupercalia or feast of Pan with all its impurities, received a new title,

as the festival of *the Virgin's purification*, with all the heathen rites continued. Temple upon temple, bearing the names of saints, new and old, added to their honours, and procured especial patrons for the builders, who became associated in a share of their merits. Shame and indignation blot the catalogue.

CHAP. III.

ON HERESIES.

THE same heresies continued to afford abundant matter for the polemics of councils, and to exercise the zeal of the orthodox; happy had that zeal been more employed upon their own souls, and the promoting the salvation of others, rather than in hurling anathemas at those who differed from them in opinion; and these opinions, only distinguished from their own, by shades of differences, perhaps, not affecting the essential truth. Of these I cannot but reckon the Novatians; many of the Donatists: the Nestorians also, I shall hope well of; nor reject the Eutycheans, among whom, with some blameable tenacity for supporting their own particularities, I still trust the truth, as it is in Jesus, remained. Nor shall I utterly reject even the Semi-pelagians, whose errors were of a more suspicious kind.

AN. 521. Curious and unprofitable questions respecting the nature of Christ, chiefly engrossed attention, and were furiously disputed. *Did one of the Trinity suffer? Was his nature compounded?*
and

and the like. Thus it will be always observable, that when the substance is lost, men will be contending for the shadow.

AN. 545—553. But one of the most pregnant subjects of debate, respected Origen and his disciples, who, smitten by a variety of councils and canons, still continued to maintain their ground. This cause espoused and defended by Theodore of Cæsaria, excited the warmest emotions; and though condemned and re-condemned, held up its head and flourished. Justinian, who had passed a severe edict against Origen and his followers, was yet greatly influenced by Theodore, an Origenist, and a Monophysite. In order to reduce the *Acephali*, a violent branch of the Monophysites to reunion, and thereby artfully to involve the council of Chalcedon and the Nestorians in the same censure, he persuaded the Emperor, as a conciliatory attempt to issue an edict, condemning what was called the *three chapters*, or the works of three bishops, in the council of Chalcedon, favourable to the Nestorian cause: and thus endeavoured to avenge himself on the Pope Vigilius, and those who had engaged the Emperor to condemn Origen. Vigilius and the African bishops fired at this attempt, immediately assembled, and condemned the Emperor and his edict, as derogatory to the honour of the three bishops, whose works were censured;

fured ; and also to the council of Chalcedon, whose authority was so far impeached. Justinian, offended at the opposition of the Roman Pontiff, ordered his appearance at Constantinople ; and having got him into his power, compelled his acquiescence on the subject of the *three chapters* : but Vigilius, on his return to Rome, being severely censured by the Illyricum and African bishops, retracted, and in a new council of seventy bishops, condemned what he had himself subscribed, for else they threatened they would withdraw from his communion, and excommunicate him as an apostate. This provoked a second imperial condemnation of the *three chapters* ; and after many altercations and disputes, produced the 5th œcumenical council of Constantinople, which confirmed the Emperor's edict, and condemned *Origen*, and *the three chapters*, as heretical. Vigilius refused his subscription, and the Emperor in wrath ordered him into banishment. A fourth time the infallible Pontiff now changed his opinions, and subscribed the decrees of the council, charging as execrable blasphemies, what he had vindicated as apostolical truth : but many bishops refused their assent, and separated from his communion : and a breach was made, which was for a long while unclosed.

The Donatists favoured by the Vandal conquerors, enjoyed a degree of peace and prosperity ;
but

but the opposition of Gregory, and the orthodox, seems to have prevailed ; and after the end of the century, we hear little more of these heretics.

The Arians maintained a firmer footing : for a long while protected by the northern clans, whom they had disciplined, and making their enemies feel the rigour of their arm. But the Vandals being expelled from Africa, and Italy recovered, these provinces returned to the orthodox faith, and several of the Gothic kings, whether from policy or conviction, changing their opinions, Arianism lost ground prodigiously before the expiration of this century, and has never since risen into power or eminence : though still bubbling up in the Church to trouble its repose.

The Nestorians in the East were the most zealous Christians, and spread abroad their tenets abundantly. The seat of their patriarch, was Selenia in Persia, from whence their missionaries are said to have extended Christianity into India, Armenia, Arabia, Syria, and all the countries adjacent. Though suffering often under the Persian monarchs, they were more favoured than any other sect of professing Christians.

AN. 578. One man, by his indefatigable zeal and industry, revived the expiring cause of the Mono-

Monophysites : a proof of the power of unwearied labour and great abilities. Scarce a bishop of eminence remained among the Eutycheans, when an obscure person, named *Jacob Baradaeus*, a monk, started from his cell, and awakening his brethren to activity, spread the tenets of the Monophysites, through Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Egypt, Nubia, and Abyffinia ; and dying in the see of Edeffa, left a flourishing society of his denomination, who bore the name of *Jacobites* from him, as their restorer. A large body of Christians of that denomination subsists in the East and in Abyffinia ; and though Abyffinian Christianity appears reduced very low, in Egypt and Syria they still remain, and the Armenians of that sect are yet numerous and respectable. Different opinions about curious and speculative points, which it would be useless to particularize, indeed divided them among themselves ; but they still formed one body, and maintained communion with each other.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

THE farther we advance the less visible to observation grows the Church of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven. The turbid atmosphere of gothic ravages darkened the scene; the heretical prevalence of Arianism during a great part of the century, contributed to extinguish the light in Israel: and Pelagianism, in its branches wide diffused, spread the subtle poison of pride and human sufficiency, through a body, already weakened by a thousand wounds, and bleeding at every pore. If we add the reign of superstition; the clouds of locust monks who overspread the earth; the general neglect of the scriptures; the universal ignorance prevalent; and encouraged, in order to give greater weight and importance to the deceivers and jugglers, whose frauds and false miracles supplanted all the necessity of revelation; we shall no longer wonder, that we find so few faithful, but that *any* should remain.

AN. 543—582. I have looked at some of the writers of that age, and their works; and I confess
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I can find little soundness in principle, and less in practice : unless I should exhibit those lights of the Church, Benedict and his associates, whose multiplied rules for a seraphic life, like the pharisaic traditions mentioned by our Lord, made men only sevenfold more the children of Satan and pride than before. If I take John the Faster ; Gregory the Great ; or that adulator of the Roman see, Ennodius ; alas ! the very best of them is sharper than a thorn hedge : more suited to pierce and wound with their asperities and follies, than to feed with any berries of truth, which they produce. Under such tutors, the pupils could receive but miserable information ; and ignorance, established as a law, reduced the knowledge of God our Saviour, and faith and true holiness, to a very low standard. Yet the light of Israel was not quite put out ; nor the power of divine grace utterly withheld. He that promised to be with, and in his Church, always, even to the end of the world, had not forsaken the earth. There were to be found, I doubt not, bishops and congregations, where the truth as it is in Jesus continued to be preached ; and though mixed with some of the superstitions of the day, not destitute of divine influence : and many individuals in simplicity and godly sincerity, followed the adorable master in the regeneration, without troubling themselves with Aristotle or Plato, and their subtleties or sophisms.

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The more remote from the scenes of contention, dissipation, and worldly pursuits, were most probably best preserved from the corruption which is in the world through lust.

The disciples of Augustin, in Africa and elsewhere, maintained manfully the doctrines of grace against the Pelagians, and Semi-pelagians, who endeavoured to corrupt them, and to introduce the debasing alloys of human sufficiency and proud reasonings: with these we may expect to find a practice correspondent with their principle of faith working by love. In France especially, Lucidus and others strenuously asserted the evangelical truths against their opposers, and contended for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Austin, the monk, sent from Gregory, if he had been less eager after archbishoprics, and less chargeable with lying miracles, would have more credit for the numerous conversions of which he boasted; yet it is to be hoped some knowledge of Christ and his gospel had been communicated to the Anglo-Saxons, amidst all the prevailing superstitions, and that some of them believed to the saving of their souls; which would be a nobler reward of his missionary labours, than the metropolitan fee.

The mountains of Cambria still afforded a race, if not of primitive Christians, though many such, it is to be hoped, were among them, yet of men who refused to obey the insolent dictates of Gregory and Austin, though threatened by him with death, for refusing canonical obedience. They chose to keep Easter, and baptize after their ancient mode. I stand astonished at Mr. Milner's credulity, and vindication of these arrogant hierarchs.

The Separatists had a particular call to watchfulness and exemplary conduct. I have ever expected to find among those, who held the fundamental truths, and were in discipline peculiarly strict, the most truly living members of Christ's body. The Nestorian zeal to spread Christianity in the East, speaks strongly in their favour; and many of like spirit were to be found among the Novatians, Donatists, and Eutycheans—I dare not add the Arians, for I account the denial of the true Deity of the Son of God, mortal error: but among the Semi-pelagians, however in dispute they might contend for human power and perfection by their own exertions, I doubt not some of them were taught by experience for their own salvation, to look to Jesus Christ alone for salvation, and received the grace of God in truth, though
fearful

fearful of admitting its all-powerful operations, and their hearts founder than their heads. I remember one of my brethren of this cast, (Mr. Charles Wesley) who, in converse one day, lovingly addressed these words to me, when speaking on the subject of divine grace, " Brother, a weatherbeaten Armian is but one step removed from a moderate Calvinist."

CENTURY VII.

CHAP. I.

ON THE EXTENT AND SUFFERINGS OF THE OUT-
WARD CHURCH.

THE barbarian conquerors had now generally submitted to the religion of the vanquished; and Lombards and Burgundians embraced the orthodox faith. The Anglo-Saxon kings of the heptarchy in England entered the pale of the Church, many of them at the instigation of their fair consorts; and easily ordered their subjects to be of their master's religion. And as England was famed for virtue and learning in that dark age, missionaries from thence and from Ireland, with St Columban at their head, issued forth to convert their neighbours. Of these the famous Willebrod an Anglo-Saxon, and his eleven associates, form an eminent group, by whose indefatigable exertions, the knowledge of Christianity, such as they taught, spread through Batavia, Friesland, Cimbria, and Denmark, and procured for the prime Apostle, the archbishopric of Utrecht, as his reward from the Roman Pontiff. AN. 615.

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We will not vouch either for the purity of the doctrines they taught, or of the motives whereby they were influenced. To rise to eminence in the Church was too flattering; and dominion over the consciences, and consequently the purses of these ignorant catechumens, was readily obtained by these men of Rome, who subjected all their converts to her dominion and supremacy; and were supported, patronised, and bishoped by her patriarch. Yet some of them, I trust, were animated by the purest motives; and if in others a mixture of zeal and superstition was found, the object of their labours was the conversion of the heathen, and not worldly aggrandisement.

AN. 610. The Jews in Spain and Gaul continued to be disciplined by the sword, and driven within the pale of the Church, whilst the zealous Heraclius in the East dragged them to the fonts, in his dominions, and nobly baptised them in multitudes: converts, I acknowledge, that forbid all boasting. But the labours of the Nestorian Christians open a more pleasing prospect, from their patriarchate of Seleucia issuing forth on every side. Their missionary efforts appear as extensive as blessed, penetrating into India, China, and the immense nations of barbarians on their northern confines, even unto Scythia and Siberia; a famous monument of which is said to have been disco-

vered by the Jesuits in the last century, and other authentic records mention a Nestorian patriarch sent thither from Seleucia.

All outward persecution against the Church, as a body had subsided, and except now and then, some scenes of transitory oppression in Persia, and turbulent attacks of implacable enmity from the Jews in Syria and Palestine, the world was comparatively at ease; or rather lulled into the profound sleep of ignorance, superstition, and monkery. A stupid external system of pompous devotion, performed by a kind of machinery, included all the services of the Church.

But now God was preparing a scourge, whose heavy hand to this day continues to be felt, and whose tyranny has nearly extinguished the Christian name from the pillars of Hercules, to the remotest East; where Mahometan darkness covers the earth, and its gross darkness the people. In the country where first the Lord of life and glory drew his breath, and all the scenes of labours and sufferings of the first apostles were displayed; in those flourishing churches through Asia and Greece, to which most of the sacred epistles are directed, there at present the abominations of the impostor and false prophet Mahomet, are seen standing in the holy places, and the crescent has supplanted

supplanted the cross—so truly truly doth God make a fruitful land barren for the iniquity of those who dwelt therein.

AN. 622. In the beginning of this century arose the famed MAHOMET, a man endowed with every talent for lifting himself to eminence in this world: deep contrivance, a noble person, ready elocution, invincible perseverance, and intrepid courage. He had exercised the business of a merchant in Arabia, and by travelling had gained a thorough knowledge of the country and its inhabitants. The Christianity there professed, had been debased by superstition, and mixed with heathenism. He conceived therefore and executed the vast project of erecting the fabric of a new religion, of which he was ambitious to be regarded as the founder and prophet. Adopting the leading article of the Christian and Jewish faith, *the unity of the Godhead*, and manifesting the highest reverence for the one Jehovah, he marked every species of polytheism and idolatry with the deepest abhorrence. He pretended a divine commission for reforming the prevalent abuses among Jews and Christians; and to bring them back to the pristine and patriarchal religion. But knowing those with whom he had to do, and the general practice of polygamy in the East, and among the Arabs, he engrafted this custom into

his religious system, and thus connected the most plausible point of doctrine, with the most seductive and indulgent practice.

I am forbidden by my necessary brevity to dwell on the character or institutions of Mahomet : and shall only observe the consummate skill which he shewed in seizing the auspicious moment, and in using the proper means, suited for the accomplishment of his purpose ; improving every advantage and incident to promote the object he had in view. Whether he was illiterate, fanatic, or impostor, certain it is he was a great man : and the success which crowned his enterprizes is a proof of the wisdom wherewith they were planned, and the vigour with which they were executed. He saw the Christians divided, disputing, and one party harassing and persecuting the other. The Monophysites and Nestorians, ready to revolt against the ill usage they had received ; and to embrace any protector, who would shield them from their oppressors—Arabia ignorant, and half pagan, prepared to turn with every wind of doctrine—distant from the seat of empire—and the Emperor Heraclius taken up with concerns nearer at home and of more importance than those of a province at the extremity of his dominions—the people around him naturally turbulent and warlike, and if united
under

under one head, sure to form a tremendous military force. His friends and connections were considerable; but the consciousness of his own native powers afforded him surer resources. He began covertly, and with small essays: success beyond his most sanguine expectations, emboldened his confidence, and he burst forth as a torrent on every side. All submitted to his arms, and generally embraced his victorious religion. His followers were naturally attached to him by the strongest ties, the love of war, and the love of women. And as in the indulgence of these heaven also could be attained, as the final recompense, it is impossible not to perceive the astonishing advantages which he possessed. His army fired by religious enthusiasm, and pursuing the most desirable objects of the corrupted heart, power, wealth, and sensual gratifications, seconded with all their might, the designs of their politic leader.

Arabia submitted during the life of Mahomet. A solid dominion acquired, and forces trained to conquest ready for farther enterprizes, afforded his successors an easy conquest through the East, in Egypt, and Africa. They cut off from the Roman Empire its noblest provinces; and threatened to subjugate the whole, had not the dissensions of ambition among the Caliphs themselves, the successors of the pretended prophet, turned their swords against

against each other, and retarded, in domestic quarrels, the ruin that rising as a flood, threatened to deluge the empire and the habitable globe.

The policy of the impostor contributed equally with his arms to spread his dominion. He contrived to set the Christians against the Christians. Proffered liberty of conscience and possession of property to all who submitted, and who paid probably no more taxes, and perhaps less than they had done to the rapacious governors, who plundered the provinces. The persecuted Nestorians, and Monophysites he cherished, and gained by his protection and liberality : and only wreaked his vengeance on those who resisted his power.

If he supported his cause and endeavoured to extricate himself from embarrassments, by pretended visions and revelations, this was only what the monks and superstitious had taught him ; and contained nothing very extraordinary. He might fairly play off their own artillery against them, and with greater advantages impose on the credulity of the populace, and secure the interested support of his associates. The gross ignorance which every where prevailed ; the grievous corruptions of doctrine and manners ; the bitter quarrels fomented among Christians ; and their irreconcilable enmity and anathemas against each other ; rendered them not only

only an easy conquest, but as easy converts to the new religion : wherein Christ, with Moses, held a high rank among the prophets, little more degraded than he had been by many professing Christian teachers ; besides, the new religion, with all the externals of fasting and prayer, and alms-giving, strictly enjoined, continued, as abundantly to gratify the pride and self-righteousness of the unhumbled heart, as the sensual indulgences allowed, afforded to the flesh all its most coveted gratifications. With such an army and such a religion, it is impossible, but that, as the state of the world was then circumstanced, and considering human nature in general, the conversions should be immense, as the conquests were rapid.

How much the Christians suffered during these conflicts it is easy to conceive, where resistance was death, or slavery. And even the promised indulgences, when once the Mahomedan power was established, became restricted. Oppression succeeded protection, and the zealous Caliphs used every art and violence to make their religion as universally triumphant as their arms.

CHAP. II.

ON THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

NOTHING can exhibit a more deplorable object than the state of the Church during this century. The ignorance that was universal and profound will hardly be credited. Many of the bishops themselves, neither able to write nor read, were sunk nearly into the same mental imbecillity as their ignorant flocks; yet at the same time exhibited in public all the pomp of thrones; vestments daubed with gold and silver; crofters, embellished with the most precious stones; and ceremonies, instead of vital religion, that required a master to teach, and some memory to retain. The monks had monopolised in their convents, the very rags of science which remained; and attempted to adorn their few and puerile performances with the extravagances of legendary saints, and quotations called *chains*, of ill tacked extracts from the fathers. But above all, they cultivated the splendid glory of polemic disputation, in order to confound, if they could not confute, the heretics. These also liberally furnished themselves with the same weapons, which introduced the study of Aristotle, and expelled Plato.

Plato. The beautiful subtleties of sophistical syllogism enabled the disputants to divide the hair of controverted points, which neither understood, and prove it, when split, to be alter, or idem, or tertium quid: with quid-dities, and quodities, and entities, and a profundity of like wisdom, that made an admiring audience gape, or the listening pupil stand amazed, lost in the depths of this unfathomable learning.

The admired writers of the day, trained up in these schools of monstrous erudition, imitated their subtle and seraphic masters. The great Bishop of Saragossa produced his miserable farrago of *sentences*, from Gregory and Austin, ill assorted and tacked together, which procured for his eminence from his learned brethren, the titles of *Salt of the Earth*, and *Light of the World*. But the salt indeed had lost its favour, and the light was become darkness which might be felt. A few unmeaning homilies composed in this stile of quotations, supplied a preached gospel, and were handed from one to another, much like Dr. Trustler's publications of our day, to the clergy, who have no time to copy for themselves. Such clerical aids were provided by the famed Bishop of Arles, Cæsarius, and the Bishop of Noyon, the revered St. Eloi. And the Greeks were hardly behind the Latins in ignorance, though an affectation of rhetorical bombast, and the highly
esteemed

esteemed allegorical and mystical obscurities of interpretation, cast a false glare around their darkness visible.

AN. 660. Monastic rules, and directions for the attainment of the supposed highest perfection of our nature, led men wholly off from the one great line of faith and holiness revealed in the book of God. Hence sprung the famous *penitentiary* of Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, describing all the various sins, and their shades of evil accurately distinguished and regularly classed, according to time, place, circumstance, and intention of the offender, in order that the clergy might form an exact scale of penance proportioned to the offence. And these fooleries gained a high reputation, and became very generally adopted: whilst the doctrine of justification by faith through the blood of Jesus alone was forgotten, and sanctification of the Spirit superseded, by practising these prescriptions of self-instituted mortification, penance, and oblations, till all real religion was lost in form and ceremonies.

The vices of the clergy and people bore a pretty exact proportion with their ignorance. It is afflicting to hear the unanimous voice of the age. To mention the charges would only excite indignation, and often offend decency. The moral instructions
were

were included in a description of certain principal virtues, and those treated in the most jejune manner. And a remedy was ready for every violation in penance and alms, and for the greatest crimes, by building, or retiring to a monastery.

I cannot perhaps elucidate the subject more fully, than by translating a beautiful specimen of the divinity of the day, descriptive of the character of a good Christian exhibited to our view, by the highly revered St. Eloi, Bishop of Noyon, in one of his famous homilies.

“ He is the *good Christian*, who comes often to Church, and brings his oblation, to be presented on God’s altar—who presumes not to taste of the fruits he hath gathered, till he hath first made his offering of them to God—who on the return of the sacred solemnities, for many days preceding, observes a sacred continence, even from his own wife, that he may approach God’s altar with a safe conscience—and who can repeat by memory the Creed and the Lord’s Prayer.” Such good Christians !

Again, “ redeem your souls from the punishment due to your sins, whilst you have the remedies in your power. Offer your tithes and oblations to the churches—light up candles in the consecrated

“ crated places according to your abilities—come
“ frequently to church, and with all humility pray
“ to the saints for their patronage and protection :
“ which things if ye do, when at the last day you
“ stand at the tremendous bar of the eternal judge,
“ ye may say confidently to him, “ Give, Lord,
“ because I have given.” *Da domine, quia dedi !*

No man stood higher on the scale of piety, wisdom, and sanctity, than St. Eloi, as will appear by the singular gifts of a miraculous nature with which he was especially furnished. One of these the writer of his life dwells upon with singular complacency.

“ Respecting this most holy personage, besides
“ his other miraculous virtues, one was especially
“ bestowed on him of the Lord ; for, on his diligent search, and persevering with singular ardor
“ of faith in this investigation, many bodies of holy
“ martyrs, concealed from human knowledge for
“ ages, were discovered to him, and brought to
“ light.” The reader probably will either smile, or groan, as he feels himself affected, over the corpses of St. Quintin, St. Plato, St. Crispin, St. Crispinian, St. Lucian, and other worthies of this kind, smelt out by the inimitable nostrils of St. Eloi, Bishop of Noyon ; and after hundreds of years of putrefaction, identified by this most accurate investigator.

tigator. Under such admired bishops, what must be the state of the miserable people ! But these relics raised the holy prelate to the summit of human reverence, and filled the coffers of his see with the most abundant oblations. The life of faith in the Son of God, and divine influence derived from his Spirit, had opened the way to heaven and glory for the primitive saints ; but St. Eloi and his fellows had found out a shorter road, by the purchase of relics, and oblations to the Church and her ministers : and if any man presumed to doubt the relics, or their efficacy, or those who produced them, irrefragable arguments were at hand to convince the most obdurate sceptic, in *the authority of the Catholic Church, and the multitude of miracles wrought by them.* The inestimable value of these things may be judged by the lamentations of a famous author of Palestine, named Antiochus, who deplores the loss of a piece of the wood of the true cross, carried off by the Persians, as among the most afflictive calamities affecting the Church of God.

CHAP. III.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT, RITES AND CEREMONIES.

THE bitter contests between Rome and Constantinople for the supremacy, proceeded to a final rupture between the eastern and western churches ; which, however frequent attempts were made to reconcile them, continues yet unclosed. The one too proud to receive an equal, the other to bear a superior. It is pretended, though on dubious evidence, that Boniface the Third engaged Phocas, the Eastern Emperor, to withdraw the title *œcumenical* from the Bishop of Constantinople, his rival, and to confer it on himself, as the price of espousing his interest ; though his hands were yet reeking with the blood of the Emperor AN. 602. Mauritius, whose throne he had usurped.

Yet certain it is, that notwithstanding all the craft and intrigue to enlarge the authority of Rome, and to create one supreme and visible head of all the churches ; this still met with great opposition from many monarchs and bishops in the West, and in the East few submitted themselves to the tyrant's patent ; but maintained their obedience to Constantinople. The ancient Britons and Scots were very refractory, and often disputed the

the Pontiff's mandate. The churches of Gaul and Spain chose to reject what they esteemed an infringement of their liberties ; and even in Italy the bishop of Ravenna and others, refused implicit submission. In order to strengthen the authority of the Roman see, her politic pontiffs contrived to attach the monks to her obedience, by encouraging them to quarrel with the bishops, and transfer their allegiance to Rome. A vast army was thus enlisted throughout the world to magnify the beast, and exalt his supremacy. Securing by their devotedness to Rome, a protector of their immunities, they were sure to find there a more indulgent superior, than when under the nearer eye of their own immediate prelates : by this means all the most arrogant pretensions of the most insolent pontiffs, found a host of defenders, and the most blasphemous ideas were broached, as if every disobedience to these wicked men, was rebellion against God, in his vicegerent upon earth. Thus wealth accumulating, and power encreasing, through the West, a dominion grew up, which in the succeeding ages launched its thunders against monarchs, and brought the proudest to the feet of the triple crown, which those Roman pontiffs assumed.

AN. 629. Every head of the Church distinguished his reign by the invention of some new holiday, and the addition of new rites and ceremonies.

nies. The *festival of the Cross* was thus instituted, the relics of which were esteemed so inestimably precious, and so diligently collected, that, after all the deeply deplored losses by infidels, more pieces of the wood were produced, than ever Simon the Cyrenian carried; and which, by some strange magic, had been preserved incorruptible six or seven hundred years, and found in such a variety of pieces and places, as was indeed ridiculously miraculous; but there was nothing too gross for that superstitious age to swallow, nor any fraud too impudent for that infallible see to invent. Vestments multiplied into wardrobes of gold and silver tissue in all the churches, with the richest chalices, crofters, crosses, shrines, too numberless to admit of detail. And now the sanctity of the churches grew to such an eminence, that they afforded a sanctuary to the most atrocious criminals, from whence they might not be taken by any process of civil justice, and where they were supported by the alms of false charity.

Hitherto the Emperor maintained the power of confirming the election of the bishops of Rome, though he remitted the fine, usually before paid to the imperial treasury. The scriptures were still in the hands of all Christians, and they read them without restraint; and it is evident from the renowned summary of Ildephonsus, that *transubstantiation*

tiation had not been yet invented, however extravagantly the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had been spoken of; and its celebration loaded with endless ceremonies, and all the possible pomp of pageantry and dress.

I mention none of the writers in the Church of this age, because I find none worth mentioning. I have given a specimen of two or three of their works, and may truly say, *ex uno disce omnes*. They contain literally nothing that will ever repay the loss of time in reading them. It may perhaps deserve a particular remark, that at the very time when Boniface the third received from the usurper Phocas, the title of *universal bishop*, and claimed dominion over the consciences of men, then arose the great eastern impostor Mahomet, which marks the commencement of the seventh century as a very memorable period.

CHAP. IV.

THE SCHISMS AND HERESIES WHICH DISTRACTED
THE CHURCH.

THE old heresies remained to trouble the peace and provoke the censures of the Church. The Arians, though declining, were numerous, and the Semi-pelagians maintained sharp warfare against Augustin and his disciples, in Gaul and Britain. There also important disputes had taken place, respecting baptism, the clerical tonsure, and the time for the celebration of Easter; trifles then of the last importance, and exercising the wisdom of synods, and the keenness of polemic rage, as much and more than the very essentials of Christianity. In the East two heresies were revived, and cast into new modes and figures; they were maintained with all the niceties of Aristotelian subtlety of dispute; and exercised the genius, and wakened up the jealousy of the church rulers.

I. The *Paulicians* are reported by their persecutors to have been a branch of the Manicheans, and from two brothers, named Paul and John, received the doctrines of Manes new modelled. The imperfect account given of them, and that by their enemies,

enemies, is to be read with suspicion, by all who know the spirit of those times. Their greatest errors, if indeed they held them, which was dubious, seem to have been, in supposing “the world” not created by the true Jehovah, but by some “evil dæmon”—denying the authority of the Old Testament, and a part of the New; though they read the Scriptures, and opposed their being confined to the clergy. They also regarded the sacraments as merely allegorical, and not literally to be observed; but they added other still more intolerable blasphemies against the reigning religion of that day, “treating the Virgin Mary contemptuously,” refusing her worship and festivals, and suggesting that she had other children beside Jesus—with equal contempt they treated the cross, and its worship and holidays, allowing no homage to this precious wood—and in their church assemblies, abolishing the names of bishops and presbyters, they instituted a set of pastors with perfect equality, without any peculiar rights, privileges, or garb, to distinguish them from the people. Suppressed by the strong arm of power and penal laws, as well as by anathemas of councils, this sect maintained still in secret its influence; and though kept down, continued to spread, and burst out with more violence in the succeeding ages, and occasioned much tumult and bloodshed. But who can say whether offending or offended? How often hath innocence,

driven to despair by oppression, been charged with every crime? In this century these heretics created but little disturbance.

II. The *Monophysites* protected in Persia, and more favoured by Mahomet and his successors, however bitterly persecuted by the Greeks, flourished in the East, and in Egypt, where the Saracen conquerors took them into their special protection. The Christians of the Greek church had exasperated them by their oppressions and persecutions; and now, they in their turn, supported their Mahometan protectors, and strengthened their hands. Heraclius observed with sorrow, the mischief occasioned to the empire, by the unchristian, as well as impolitic persecutions, which had driven out so numerous a body of subjects, and forced them into the hands of his enemies. Impressed with this idea, he held a conference with Paul and Athanasius, the heads of this sect, on the properest methods of their re-union, and return to the Greek church; and what temperament could be found to reconcile the contending parties. Glad to embrace so auspicious an opening, these principals of this dissenting party assured the Emperor, that the spirit of concord might be restored, provided the Greeks would admit, that after the union of the two natures in Christ, there was but *one will* or *operation* concurrent of the human with the divine; that in
this

this case the *Monotholites*, (the name now assumed) would receive the council of Chalcedon, and live in peace with their brethren. Heraclius consulted the Patriarch of Constantinople, Sergius; who, either ignorant of the nature of man, or of the subject in dispute; or inclined, as it is said, to the Monotholite doctrine, strengthened with his suffrage, the adoption of this new explanation given, as consistent with the catholic faith and the decrees of Chalcedon: and an imperial edict published the peace of the Church and the reconciliation of the Monotholites. AN. 622.

At first this scheme promised the happiest success, and a synod assembled at Alexandria confirmed the tenor of the edict, and admitted the soundness of the doctrine of the Monotholites; multitudes of whom, in consequence returned into the communion of the established Church. But alas! the spirit of bigotry and discord admitted no such pacificatory methods long to maintain the quiet of the Church and the empire. A turbulent monk, named Sophronius, had violently opposed the decree at the synod of Alexandria, and having been raised to the see of Jerusalem, he summoned another council there, in which all the anathemas before denounced against the Monophysites, were renewed against the Monotholites. The cry of heresy was the war whoop of that day, and each
side

fide prepared himself for the battle. To secure the Roman Pontiff was a great object. At this Sophronius and Sergius laboured with all diligence and intrigue. The Patriarch of Constantinople prevailed; and Honorius, either ignorant of the merits of the question, gained by the Emperor, or taken in by the artful representations of Sergius, gave his suffrage for the *one will*, and *operation*: but the breach was opened, and pride and contention employed all their efforts to widen it.

AN. 638. The Emperor Heraclius, to silence the angry disputants, issued a second edict, called the *ecthesis*, and said to be composed by Sergius the patriarch of Constantinople, forbidding all controversies on the subject, and leaving the *one will* in possession of orthodoxy. To this the succeeding patriarch Pyrrhus, and the bishops of the East submitted quietly; but in the West the case was very different. The Roman Pontiff, stimulated by Sophronius, assembled a fresh council, condemned the decision of his predecessor Honorius, and the *ecthesis* of the Emperor, and sharpened all the Church's artillery afresh, in anathemas against the Monotholites.

AN. 641. The flame of controversy now burst forth more fiercely than ever; nor had the decree of the Emperor Constans, who succeeded Heraclius,

clius, though suppressing the *ecthesis*, and enjoining silence on all parties, a happier issue; for alas! he had to do with men, who, however ignorant and profligate, were so tremblingly alive to the most distant approaches of heresy, that they resolved to find or make matter of condemnation in the last edict, as in the former; and Martin of Rome, at the head of an hundred and five bishops, condemned both the edicts of the Emperors, and consigned over to the devil and his angels to all eternity, the Monotholites, and whoever patronised them.

The Emperor Constans resolved not to put up with this affront from the insolent Pontiff of Rome, and ordered him to be seized and banished to the Isle of Naxos. Others, who were the more turbulent, were exiled into different places; and for a while the peace of the Church was maintained by the high hand of imperial authority. The two successors in the Roman see overawed, and perhaps men of more moderation, kept things quiet during the reign of Constans: but under his son and successor, Pogonatus, the fire which had been long smothering beneath the ruins, burst forth with redoubled violence, and called for a sixth œcumenical council at Constantinople, to settle

AN. 680. this knotty subject. Pogonatus, gained by Agatho, Bishop of Rome, consented
to

to the condemnation of the Monotholites, and Pope Honorius, with all the preceding edicts ; and sanctioned by penal laws, and the imperial authority, the decrees of the council against all opposers. Thus was the controversy finally decided, and the Monotholites suppressed throughout the empire. A branch of them however took root in the fastnesses of Mount Libanus, where, from their leader Maro, they gained the name of Maronites, and subsist unto this present day, though it is said for a long while reconciled to the church of Rome. A supplemental council met at the end of the century, to settle the important subject of forms and ceremonies, &c. Among other decisions of which, I shall only remark two ; the allowance of priests to marry : and the settling the equal rank of the bishops of Rome and Constantinople. AN. 691.

CHAP. V.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

WHOEVER casts his eye over the dreary scene described, will be constrained to acknowledge how little of true religion could possibly remain in the Church of God, corrupt in all the superior branches, and contaminated by such examples: where ignorance sat enthroned; and all zeal was expended on idle ceremonies or trifling disputes. Yet had not the Lord left his Church without witnesses. I cannot but be confident, that many such remained, though hidden from observation, and calling no attention from the great saints and polemics of that day. The highly exemplary zeal of the Nestorians to spread the knowledge of Christ through the dark regions of the East, and the extent and success of their labours, suggest a strong evidence that the religion of the Son of God was cultivated in its power and divine influence among many of them.

Nor shall I hastily believe all that their enemies charge on the Paulicians, when I see such favourable appearances of an attempt to oppose the reigning superstitions, and to reform the abuses in
church

church government. Though, as is usually the case in this matter, that, like the vibrations of the pendulum when extreme on one hand, its oscillations are naturally as extreme on the other. I hope, however, that they who read the Scriptures of the New Testament, and refused the worship of the Virgin and the Cross, reserved their adoration for him who died upon it; and that the reduction of their ritual to greater simplicity, proved a more devotional spirit, and a truer simplicity of heart. Within the catholic pale itself, though the candle burnt but dimly, clouded with superstition and ignorance, yet was not the light utterly extinguished. Amidst the efforts to promote Christianity in the lands of pagan ignorance, some real religion stimulated the zealous missionaries; and in the different fields where they laboured, true converts, it must be hoped, were made to the faith of Christ.

The churches of England and Scotland, according to the testimony of the venerable Bede, rejected the imperious claims of Rome and her legates; maintained their independence, and seem not as yet destitute of that liberty, known by all in whom the Spirit of the Lord is.

The disciples of Augustin held fast the doctrine of that revered father; and with the evangelical principles, the power of godliness hath ever rested.

At

At the close of this century also the first traces appear of a small but precious body, afterwards named Waldenses, which some suppose a branch of the Paulicians. Retiring from the insolences and oppressions of the Romish clergy, and disgusted with their vices, they sought a hiding place, in the secluded vallies of the Pais de Vaud, embosomed by the Alps, and removed from the observation of their persecutors, where they might enjoy purer worship, and communion with God. The origin of this flock of reformation cannot perhaps be exactly ascertained. They themselves affirm, that they began to separate themselves from the corruptions of the Romish church about three hundred years after the reign of Constantine. Reinerus, who from an apostate among them, as is usually the case, turned a most envenomed persecutor, complains, "That no other heretics had given the Church of Rome so much disturbance: being of very ancient origin, widely dispersed, and bearing the strongest appearances of piety and the true faith." He speaks of them under the name of *Leonists*, as a sect which had subsisted more than five hundred years. Their name of Waldenses is said by some to be derived from a teacher of eminence among them, cotemporary with Berengarius, but rather probably from the vallies, where they first took refuge. Their beginnings were indeed small, but they had in time great increase,
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and the vital spark of heavenly fire seems to have been in an especial manner preserved in this wilderness.

Neither numbers, power, nor greatness constitute the Church. No man can belong to it, who is not joined to the Lord in one Spirit; and however reduced the body may be to appearance, yet like the seven thousand in Israel, who would not bow the knee to Baal, Christ still had his remnant, according to the eternal counsel of his will. The foundation of the Church stood secure: the Lord knew those that were his, in the darkest hour of the deepest apostacy.

CENTURY VIII.

CHAP. I.

THE EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE CHURCH.

THE farther we advance in our pursuit, the deeper the darkness thickens round us. All is a dreary blank of ignorance, superstition, and unchristian contentions; and if here and there a lucid beam darts across the path, it is but as the shooting meteor of the night, and as quickly extinguished.

The Church seems to have lost every thing, which gave it characteristic excellence, purity of doctrine, and real sanctity of manners; and glittering in the tinsel ornaments with which human pride had arrayed her, stood confessed the whore sitting on the seven mountains, and filling the earth with the wine of her fornication. It is painful to pursue the progress of fraud, ambition, and vice, rising to its summit over an abject world, and to lament, even over many of the boasted conquests of the Church, as almost equally deplorable with her sufferings.

In the East, the Saracens continued to spread their arms and religion through Asia and Africa,

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inflicting

inflicting upon the vanquished Christians the miseries and oppressions which a new dominion and a different religion necessarily brought in their train; whilst the distracted state of the eastern empire prevented all vigorous opposition, and left the provinces an easy prey to the ravagers. Indeed had not their own intestine quarrels prevented, the whole must have fallen before the victorious Caliphs. For at Constantinople all was confusion and contest: Emperor after Emperor was dethroned, and banished; the struggles for dominion engaged them in domestic wars and intrigues; whilst the divisions in the Church carried on with equal inveteracy, though their saracenic foes were at the door, palsied the arm of resistance; biting and devouring one another they invited their enemies to seize the desolated empire.

A new enemy also, the Turks, from the wilds of mount Caucasus, bursting forth as a flood, swept the plains of Armenia, Albania and Colchis, and vanquishing the saracenic hosts, turned their arms against the Grecian Emperors, and proved a dreadful scourge to all the Christians, as far as their ravages extended; and more than balanced the successes which the good Nestorians are reported to have gained in the country within Mount Imaus, the seat of the Mongal, Ufbek, Calmuc, and Nogaiian Tartars. As these enlargements of the Christian

tian pale were attended with no weapons but persuasion, and effected purely by the zeal of the missionaries, we may hope there was a real presence and power of God attending their ministrations, and a Christianity of a very different cast from what will be seen in the west, where the sword of Charlemagne appears to have produced greater effects than the sword of the gospel.

As the concerns of the Church in the West will become the chief object of attention, to those I shall particularly advert.

AN. 711—714. The SARACENS passing the Straits of Gibraltar, had rushed like a torrent into Spain, and extended their conquests to the mouths of the Rhone: Sicily, Sardinia, Corfica, and part of Italy suffered by their ravages. The Grecian Emperors could oppose but a feeble barrier to their progress, and had not the gallic arms resisted their encroachments, and checked their career, Europe seemed ready to fall under the Mahometan yoke. Though submission to the conquerors secured life, and some of its advantages, yet the sufferings and oppression of the Christians were great, and their number awfully diminished by conversion to the dominant religion; with which in every country, they who have no religion will easily incorporate. The churches were turned into mosques, and frequent-

ed as before. Ignorance, superstition and apostacy from all christian godliness had made the transition imperceptible; and as every worldly inducement was held out by the conquerors, to seduce their subjects to Mahomedism, the number of those who professed Christianity, and dared to suffer for it the loss of all things, was comparatively small. The rest were a too easy prey for delusion; nor indeed did they either gain or lose spiritually by the change of their religion, as they continued exactly the same men: with regard to any real excellence, their former Christianity gave them none.

The greater part of Germany, and the North, continued yet in pagan ignorance, and notwithstanding the efforts of the Anglo Saxon missionaries, the progress hitherto made appears not to have been great. An English benedictine monk, called Winifrid, and afterwards more distinguished by the name of Boniface, became the chief apostle of the Germans, and with other associates, under royal patronage, boasted of the thousands or rather millions of their converts. It must be confessed, Boniface was little formed on the apostolic model: his zeal was furious, and all means lawful, which could contribute to the end he had in view. The secular arm, and all the pious frauds then in use, he failed not to employ with success. Profoundly ignorant himself
of

of the true nature of that gospel, which he affected to proclaim, and more fiercely set on advancing the interests of Rome, and his own sacerdotal importance, than to form disciples of the lowly Jesus, he and his associates vigorously attacked these illiterate barbarians to bow their necks in subjection to the papal dominion, and waited to receive the abundance of ecclesiastical honours, as the reward of their toil. The gallic monarchs who extended their conquests through the North, hoped by propagating Christianity among the pagans to soften the ferocious manners of their newly acquired subjects; and at the same time, by acts of splendid piety and church endowments, to *redeem their own souls* from the dreadful crimes that generally marked their rule. Such monarchs and such missionaries were too correspondent; and their exactions on their new converts more than once occasioned fearful tumults and rebellions; so that Alcuin, the famous tutor of Charlemagne, and a partial relator, acknowledges, “they were more intent upon tythes than truth, “and deserved the title of plunderers rather than “preachers.”

AN. 714. After CLOVIS, the King of the Franks, whose conversion we have recorded, the monarchs descending from him were but a feeble and degenerate race. The first officer under them, called the MAYOR OF THE PALACE, having all the administra-

tion of affairs lodged in his hands, grew by degrees above his masters. The famous MARTEL, Mayor to Childeric, distinguished himself by his opposition to the Saracens, who having passed the Straits of Gibraltar and conquered Spain, threatened to spread over Europe; but were checked in their career by his victorious arms. Radbod, King of the Frielanders, also felt and acknowledged his superiority. Boniface, who in discouragement had returned to England, was called back, and strongly supported by the conqueror; and with a number of fresh associates, preached with great success among the Frielanders, Hessians, and Thuringians, for whom the superstitious piety of the gallic monarchs founded bishoprics in abundance, over which Boniface was appointed archbishop at Mentz.

AN. 752. PEPIN, who succeeded Martel, as mayor of the palace, thought he might now safely seize the throne, as he already possessed the power; and having secured the suffrage of the states in France, they advised him to consult the Pope upon the lawfulness of the act; that so he might do it under the sanction of the Church *with a good conscience*. Zachary, Bishop of Rome, being previously gained, and needing the gallic monarch to protect him from the Greeks and Lombards, and raise him to the supremacy which he coveted, gave his opinion, that, "the divine law permitted the indo-

"lent

“lent monarch of a warlike people, to be dethroned by one more worthy to rule.” Under this sanction, without opposition, Childeric was deposed, and Pepin stepped into the throne of his master, assuming the name of King, as he had before exercised the authority. As a *most Christian King* therefore, he now became in duty bound to support the see of Rome, that had so cordially seconded his views. The decision of Zachary was confirmed by Stephen, his successor, who came to France to solicit help from Pepin against the Lombards; and as an easy price for it, solemnly absolved him from the oath of fidelity and allegiance to his king, which he had broken, and crowned and anointed him and his sons, in order to render his person more sacred, and his dominion more revered by his subjects.

The interests of the Church were thus strongly secured by these aspiring pontiffs, and the kings of France bound to advance the spiritual dominion of those who had been such friendly casuists, to seat them on the throne.

AN. 726. The contest about images, of which I shall elsewhere speak, had occasioned much tumult in Italy. The Pope was in opposition to the Emperor: the Lombard kings profited by the contentions, and seized Ravenna and other Gre-

cian possessions, and attempted the reduction of Rome and all Italy to their dominion. The affrighted Pope therefore summoned Pepin to his assistance. Pepin, grateful, passed the Alps, and having conquered the exarchate of Ravenna from the Lombard king, compelled him to cede that principality to the Roman Pontiff. But the Lombard repenting the treaty he had made, renewed the war, and seized upon the city. This brought Pepin again to the Pope's assistance. The King of Lombardy was vanquished, and compelled to evacuate a farther extent of territory; all which the King of France bestowed on the Roman see, and thereby laid the foundation of all her future greatness.

On the death of Pepin, the Lombard monarch made a fresh attempt to recover his lost dominions. The fugitive Pope fled for succour to Charles the successor of Pepin, who received him with great respect, and with pleasure embraced the opportunity of passing the Alps, and carrying his victorious arms into Italy. His success was complete. He routed the Lombard army, seized the throne and person of the monarch, and put a final period to the Lombard kingdom in Italy. AN. 768.

The crafty Pope came in for a large share of the spoil; and Charles added considerably to the former grants

grants with an especial view, as the holy Pontiff suggests, that the King of France might thus *atone for his sins* ; for in that age, no more effectual method could be suggested, than by enriching the Church, and interesting thereby her ministers to intercede for the royal culprit.

Charles, surnamed *Charlemagne*, or the GREAT, meant by these acts of pious benevolence, not only to secure *the salvation of his soul*, but politically to advance his own interests and ambitious designs ; intending, with the Pope's approbation, to raise himself to imperial state, and assume the rank from which the debased condition of the Grecian Empire was degrading the sovereigns of the East. Accordingly in the last year of the century, being on a visit to the Roman Pontiff, it was resolved that Charles should be inaugurated with the purple mantle, and raised to the empire of the West. His election was speedily determined, his imperial titles proclaimed, and himself solemnly consecrated by the much obliged and obsequious Roman Pontiff.

AN. 800. During these expeditions, the Saxons, only nominally subdued, revolted against Charles, and being vanquished, after a severe struggle, he attempted to break their savage spirit, by converting them to Christianity : but their resistance being
obstinate,

obstinate, and their seditions renewed, he resolved to compel them to come within the pale of the Church ; and a missionary army drove the enslaved Saxons by troops to the missionary baptists. Caresses and rewards seconding the threats of vengeance, the nation in general accepted the offer to become Christians, in preference to be made slaves, and were baptised by thousands.

CHAP. II.

THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

NOTHING could present a more dreary scene than the internal state of the Church in this century ; ravaged with wars in the East, and by the spreading conquests of the Saracens in Spain, Sicily, Sardinia, Calabria. Meanwhile, the progress of superstition was rapid in proportion to the wealth and power, unto which the Church-rulers were advancing. The knowledge pursued was of the most superficial kind ; and the profoundest ignorance of the most important truths of real Christianity universally prevalent. The quarrels between Constantinople and Rome were the most bitter and scandalous, and a precedent afforded for the same prelati- cal contests for diminution and extension of authority every where. The clergy were contaminated with the most scandalous vices, manifest in the canons made to restrain them ; and naturally resulting from the wealth and indulgences in which they wallowed, the reverence they had contrived to attract from their office, and the impunity it generally secured : sure to be screened by their brethren from disgrace, for the honour of the Church.

As

As the northern nations had generally adopted the druidical superstitions, in which the priesthood had very peculiar privileges ; these, on their conversion, the new priesthood endeavoured to secure unto themselves : and the Papal see being the great object of monkish reverence and missionary zeal, to this a wondrous measure of blind obedience was transferred.

The strongly inculcated doctrine, which always was the darling theme of the clergy, of the high merit of liberal donations to the Church, poured in a flood of wealth and possessions upon it in every place. No man living or dying failed to interest some faint or other in his favour : and as the opulent, the warrior, and the monarch, were usually the most profligate, and led to the commission of the most atrocious crimes, they had it in their power *to redeem their souls*, at an easy price, by sharing with the Church and her saints, the fruits of their plunder, rapine, and murders ; by founding monasteries, building churches, and enriching the ministers of religion ; who not only thus pronounced their absolution, and relieved them from the pains due to their sins, but associated them in all the merits of saints and martyrs. Emperors, and monarchs, and wealthy nobles, not only now gave them gold, silver, vestments, but estates, dignities, feudal tenures. Thus the bishops became dukes,

dukes, counts, marquisses, invested with regalia in their own domains ; administering justice ; supreme in their several seignieuries ; and often heading armies, which they levied, to follow as feudal barons the quarrels of their liege lord, or to decide contentions among themselves. Of these the Roman pontiffs, through the munificence of the gallic monarchs, had the most abundant share ; and being set up as the object of prime veneration, and appealed to in all difficulties and quarrels in the western world, the immensity of wealth and power which flowed into them from a thousand channels, is scarce to be conceived. Every bishop, monastery, and priest, extended their claims over ignorance and superstition, and were sure to find support at Rome for the most extravagant pretensions, provided they took care to divide the spoil with her. All discipline necessarily relaxed, when impunity could thus be purchased ; and the monasteries filled with sloth, ignorance, and wealth, could not but exhibit what the records of the time confess, scenes of voluptuousness, ambition, quarrels and impurity.

Yet monkery maintained the highest character for sanctity, and the monasteries were multiplied and filled with inhabitants. It was esteemed the perfection of piety to retire to these seclusions : and in those times of anarchy and confusion, when crimes

crimes of the most atrocious nature accumulated, no remedy was so effectual to efface all guilt, and to secure the sinner from all punishment, as to build, or to inhabit them.

Knowledge profane, as well as scriptural, ceased to be cultivated, except by a few in the East, where the Aristotelian philosophy was diligently studied, as affording the happiest weapons for controversy ; but in the Church, the most miserable homilies, like those of St. Eloi and others, learned by heart, and repeated memoriter, afforded little instruction ; whilst the wretched lives of the saints, stuffed with lying miracles, and the most absurd and superstitious practices, exhibited the most delusive patterns for imitation.

AN. 735. In Italy the dim twilight of science threatened the final extinction of all literature. In Britain and Ireland an asylum seems to have been still afforded to the little learning which had survived the former shocks. The venerable Bede and others maintained the honour of the Saxon church. From thence Charlemagne endeavoured to draw assistants to revive the sciences, which he encouraged by his own example, and promoted by his liberality. He founded schools through his dominions, and invited with great rewards the most learned men to his court ; placing his own children

dren and those of his nobility, under the care of the most distinguished masters. The famous AN. 780. Alcuin, and others, were of this honourable number, and gave hope of blowing up the expiring spark into a flame ; but it must be confessed the issue corresponded not with the expectations of the monarch. The mode of teaching, the things taught, the prevailing superstitions, the love of a military life, or the idleness of a convent, prevented any considerable progress : and few of the pupils attained any eminence of science, though the Emperor himself was among the most ardent in the pursuit. In general the grossest ignorance prevailed, and bishops and priests could often neither read nor write ; content to learn by rote the formularies of devotion, and the ceremonies attending them, which now became multiplied, and supplied the place of all spiritual worship. As the Emperor's liberality had furnished the ministers of the Church with abundance, so his establishment of uniformity lessened their labour, and his happy provision for ignorance in the *homilarium*, that bears his name, rendered study unnecessary : a worthless and idle clergy, little disposed to copy their Monarch's diligence, therefore took their salaries, learnt their lesson by rote, and got through it as speedily as possible.

The

The sacred relics continued to afford a most profitable source of wealth and veneration, were sought with avidity, and purchased as inestimable treasures. What pilgrims brought from the Holy Land had peculiar value ; but an host of saints and martyrs were unkennelled from the charnel houses and cemeteries at home, by multitudes whose nostrils were nearly as acute as those of St. Eloi ; and who made much the same advantage of them in their various churches and monasteries, to which they attracted peculiar reverence, and procured the liberal donations of the superstitious. It is impossible to recount the names of these saints ; the nature of the relics discovered ; and the honours paid to them. The grossest frauds were every where swallowed with avidity by the ignorant and priest-ridden populace.

CHAP. III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH—NEW
RITES AND CEREMONIES.

THE supreme government of the Church had always hitherto been in the eastern emperors, without whom, as yet, though the election of a pontiff might be made, it was not wholly valid till his approbation and consent was obtained. He also appointed to many of the chief sees, and deposed from them almost at his pleasure. The Roman pontiff longed for an emancipation from all dependance on the Emperor, as he had constantly intrigued, and contended against the patriarch of Constantinople for the supremacy. He often dared to resist the imperial edicts; and formed, with the bishops under his jurisdiction and influence, a strong party to thwart the Emperor and his patriarch. Nor were anathemas spared, though hitherto not supposed to carry with them all the fearful consequences that quickly began to follow them. At the beginning of this century, the contests and bickerings which had so long been kept on foot, received a peculiar exasperation from two occasions, on which the Greek and Latin churches divided, and sharply disputed for victory.

AN. 712. The first regarded the noted controversy *respecting images*. The progress of superstition had multiplied images and pictures in the churches. From a simple memorial, a high veneration grew up for these holy representations of Christ, his mother, the saints and martyrs; some of them acquired a peculiar sanctity; and like the Pagan images of their deities, were supposed to contain a peculiar inhabitation and presence of the person, whom it represented. BARDANES, the Emperor, at the beginning of this century, with the approbation of John, the patriarch of Constantinople, determined to remove a picture of the sixth general council from the Church of St. Sophia; and sent his orders to Rome to exclude all pictures and images from the churches. The Pope, so far from complying with the requisition, ordered other paintings to be set up in St. Peter's Church, and in a council summoned by him, condemned the Emperor and his abettors. The revolution, which quickly ensued, removed Bardanes from the throne; and for a while the quarrel became suspended.

But LEO, called the *Isaurian*, revived the AN. 726. dispute with imperial vigour. Shocked at the reproaches of Jews and Mahometans, he resolved to destroy this stumbling block; and issued an edict to remove images of every kind from the churches, and to forbid all worship being paid to them. The spark instantly kindled into an explosion.

explosion. Fanatic zeal burst all bounds of allegiance, and the superstitious people were instigated to rebellion by those priests and monks, who had for a long while, by this craft procured their gain; they proclaimed the Emperor an apostate, and the subjects released from all duty to such an enemy to God and his saints. The Roman pontiffs encouraged this spirit of revolt, and hoped to turn the current in their own favour, and render themselves independent of the imperial edicts. A civil war now raged in the islands of the Archipelago, and in part of Asia; and the Roman and Italian provinces, at the instigation of the Pope and his clergy, rebelled, and murdered or banished the Emperor's officers. LEO enraged, hastened to revenge the insult, but was foiled and compelled to retire in disgrace. In fury he vented his wrath on those around him, who patronised the image worship. In a council held at Constantinople, he degraded the patriarch Germanus, and substituted Anastasius in his place, commanding all the images to be collected from the churches, and publicly burned; with the severest punishment denounced on those who should be found practising this idolatrous worship. Thus the war was declared and prosecuted with the utmost fury by the inveterate combatants with arms spiritual and temporal, to the great distraction of the empire, the damage of the Christian cause, and the strengthening the hands

of the Saracens, less hated by the bishops of Rome than Leo and his image breakers. In these conflicts many of the Grecian provinces in Italy were torn from the Empire.

AN. 741. The son of Leo, CAPRONYMUS, succeeding to the throne, and inheriting his father's antipathy to images, exerted every effort in suppressing the hated worship, and subduing the rebellious pontiffs and their fanatic crew of monks and clergy : and as the way of arms had not succeeded, he summoned a seventh general

AN. 754. council at Constantinople, in which images and their worship were solemnly condemned. But alas ! the decrees were only obeyed as far as the sword of the Emperor had power to enforce them, and despised by Rome and her partisans : nor were the exemplary punishments inflicted on the monkish preachers of sedition, effectual to extinguish the flame of revolt, which continued to blaze forth. His son and successor trod in the same steps ; resolved to abolish so great an abomination, he enforced by the most rigorous punishments the edicts of his predecessors. To avenge himself on the Roman pontiffs for their obstinacy, all that church's possessions in Sicily and Calabria were confiscated ; and these provinces, with Illyricum, withdrawn from the jurisdiction of Rome to Constantinople ; a cause of enmity

enmity irreconcilable : and thus a way was paved for the final separation of the churches, and the provocation given to the Roman pontiff to seek a new master, by setting up another Emperor, though in fact intending to make him his subject. This was however only the work of years of cunning and intrigue. For at first the Emperor of the West, Charlemagne, enjoyed all imperial prerogatives ; and a council assembled at Rome, decreed to him and his successors the right of nominating to the see of Rome ; and though they waved this right, and allowed of election as before, their approbation was still necessary to its validity. They also exercised jurisdiction in many cases, of what was called a spiritual nature ; enacted laws for, and punished the offences of the clergy, as of others ; and received tribute from the churches and monasteries, as from lay fees, unless they had granted them an especial exemption. Charles indeed allowed the Roman church a great increase of power as of territory ; but a council was still required to decide important controversies, and this convened by the Emperor ; and its edicts were valid only when confirmed by him : so that though the jurisdiction and authority of the Roman pontiffs were greatly increased, they were still subject to the Emperor's controul, and they dared not as yet affect that independency, to which they were aspiring.

When the cause of image-worship appeared nearly extinct in the East, a revolution of the most horrid kind rendered the Roman pontiff triumphant. A cup of poison ministered by IRENE, the Empress, to her husband, opened a way for her holding the reins of government, during the minority of her son; and this auspicious moment was seized by Adrian, the Pope, to league himself with this monster of a woman. A second Nicene council abrogated the former decisions, and sanctioned the worship of images, with anathemas against those who insisted on the worship of *God alone*. AN. 787.

St. Gregory had forbidden "images from being worshipped in any manner whatsoever." Charlemagne and his bishops held a middle path in this controversy, and supposed pictures and images might be allowed in the churches; but the worship of them was forbidden. Their decision was sent to Adrian, who disapproved of it, and composed a refutation: but in opposition to his infallibility and the Nicene council, this worship was condemned in a new synod, held at Frankfort, of three hundred bishops, convoked by the Emperor. So that hitherto the Church of Rome had neither established her infallibility nor supremacy. AN. 794.

A second

A second and as fierce a controversy about *the procession of the Holy Ghost* revived, and rose to an alarming height ; and, with the former on images, tended to widen the breach, and complete the separation of the eastern and western churches : the one adhering as pertinaciously to the words *proceeding from the Father and the Son*, as the other to the rejection of them in the Nicene Creed.

Thus whilst the Roman pontiffs, struggling for power, pre-eminence, and independence of any superior, artfully seized every occasion of exalting their own importance, religion sunk into obscurity, and all its purity and vitality were lost in senseless rites and pompous ceremonies. No preaching remained, but stupid unmeaning homilies ; no public worship but in empty forms ; the Lord's supper was made a piece of pageantry ; and private masses of a solitary priest for the souls of the dead, added another lucrative source of sacerdotal pillage, as these required to be well paid for by the relations of the deceased.

The Roman model of worship, with very few exceptions, was by Charlemagne adopted generally through the western churches, and tended to form one link more in the chain, that was to bind them at the feet of the Papal throne.

CHAP. IV.

SCHISMS AND HERESIES.

THE grand contest between the eastern and western churches about images and the procession of the Holy Ghost, with the creation of a new empire, to which the Romish patriarch adhered, made the separation of the churches unavoidable. So many old and new quarrels had rendered the breach irreparable; and the secession of Rome from the Grecian empire completed it; whatever healing efforts were afterwards made to preserve the unity of the Church, they proved abortive.

In the East, the same heresies maintained their ground. The *Monotholites* were favoured by many under the Greek emperors, and the *Nestorians* were cherished and found particular favour from the Saracens. The *Semi-pelagians* continued in Gaul to infect multitudes; and *Arianism* among the barbarous nations who first embraced it, greatly prevailed.

A dispute originating in Spain, now under Saracenic government, in what sense "Christ was
" the

“ the Son of God ? ” gave an exercise for council upon council, to debate about matters of curious disquisition, and to condemn Felix, a bishop, and his adherents, who had received the name of *Adoptians*, from their sentiments on the filiation of the Son of God. Terms ill-defined furnished matter for the polemics ; and the most zealous against the least approach of heresy, were often the most ignorant of all saving truth.

CHAP. V.

OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

AMIDST the desolations which spread on every side, some faint glimmerings of divine grace still appear. In England and Ireland, though with much superstition, traces of the truth as it is in Jesus remained. Bede, Alcuin, and others, seem to be men fearing God, and working righteousness.

The Nestorians under the Saracenic government, evidently displayed their zeal for Christianity; and probably maintained some living spark of godliness among them.

AN. 748. Clement, an Irishman, an opponent of the ignorant and fanatic Boniface of Mentz, provoked the archbishop to procure his condemnation at Rome, where probably he ended his days in prison. His crime was, the preferring the Scriptures, and his appeal to them, in opposition to the dictates of the fathers and the decisions of councils. The accusations preferred against him by Boniface were many, and we have no vindication of his own; but we have from the charges themselves abundant

abundant cause to conclude, that his sentiments were maliciously misrepresented, and that he was a much sounder apostle of the Catholic faith, than his insolent persecutor ; who at the same time condemned Virgilius as a heretic, for suggesting there were antipodes : but these days of ignorance and superstition afforded like specimens of the insolence and stupidity of Popish legates.

The poor refugees, in the valleys of Piedmont, seem to have been left to themselves ; probably too few and contemptible to attract notice, or too far removed from the observation of the proud prelates, who could have got any thing by persecuting them.

Dispersed throughout the world, a *few* and but a few, probably yet read the Scriptures, embraced the great and precious promises, and amidst all the contentions and fooleries of the day, held fast the truth as it is in Jesus. The disputes about image-worship would necessarily turn the attention of many to the true object of worship ; and the renunciation of all false mediators would naturally lead to him who is the only true mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. His essential deity and glory was an article confidently maintained in the Catholic Church, and neither Felix nor Elipand are accused of denying this.

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The few faithful were left indeed to grope their way to heaven through thick darkness and reigning superstition : thinly dispersed in the earth, as the gleanings of the vineyard, when the vintage is done. If we look for a visible church of outward observation, and “ a society of faithful people among whom the word of God was truly preached, and the sacraments duly ministered,” it will be hard to find such in the Greek or Roman communion, unless among those whom I have mentioned, and whom “ the world knew not.”

A few individuals indeed, of some respectability in the Church, have been produced by the exemplary patience of the learned Milner. He hath from the heap of chaff sifted out some grains of evangelical excellence sufficient to prove, that the light of divine truth, however dim, was not utterly extinct. The extracts he produces from names almost unknown, will be read with pleasure ; but they are flowers culled from gardens overspread and smothered with weeds. And whoever should be at the pains to translate either of the ancients from whence they are taken, must produce such a farrago of trumpery, such folly, superstition and monkery, as would stamp the whole with contempt, if any thing similar was found in a modern Christian author. And notwithstanding the high encomiums passed on many in these dark ages, I doubt whether

whether the works of any one of them would now find a bookseller to publish, or an individual to read them. Not merely the vast folios of lumber discourage, but the individual treatises from which the extracts are made, would be tedious and disgusting. Truth engages me to make these observations, whilst every man of God must acknowledge his obligations to the laborious investigation which has brought forth these passages to notice. Respecting some of the characters which Milner has marked with excellence, I am often compelled to be of a different mind, and can regard here and there an evangelical sentiment but as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout; while his partiality to Rome and her pretensions, never can meet my approbation.

Amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas.

CENTURY IX.

CHAP. I.

ON THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

WE are descending deeper and deeper still into the regions of darkness and primæval night: Pursuing the history of a Church, without Christianity; and receiving from the toil of investigation little else but disgust and disappointment. Scarcely a feature remains of primitive simplicity and purity; but the advancing depravity of manners according to the universal testimony was great, as all the doctrines of truth were distorted by the superstitions, frauds, idolatry and ignorance of the teachers. However I shall grope my way through the jarring elements of pride, ambition, sacerdotal rapine, and luxuriousness, as well as I can.

The parts professing the Christian name continued to suffer the severest ravages from without, as well as miseries within; and the conquests of its enemies in one part rather exceed the spread of its dominion in another. The East submitted to the Caliphs. Africa was subdued. They extended their conquests to India and throughout the Persian empire.

pire. Sicily was added to Spain and Sardinia; Crete and the islands fell before them; Calabria they entered, and subdued; and Italy was ready to submit to the yoke. Amidst these conquests, and the desolations therewith connected, severe were the sufferings of the vanquished; and in the contests between the conquerors themselves, the Turks in the East attacking alike Saracens and Greeks, the people of the countries before professing Christianity, were the sad victims of both parties; and multitudes to avoid the loss of their property, secured their possessions and liberty by adopting the religion of their masters.

AN. 832—900. From the northern hive a fresh swarm of piratical plunderers, Danes or Normans, infested the coasts of Germany, Britain, Gaul, Spain, and even penetrated into the heart of Italy, every where carrying fire and sword, plunder, and captivity; and if repulsed in one part, landing and ravaging another. And where the fertility of the country invited, and their force was sufficient to retain possession, in the feeble state of many countries, there they erected principalities; and Europe suffered incredible misery from their long and repeated devastations. The little remaining traces of knowledge they extinguished; and often vented their peculiar rage on the religious communities and churches, as affording the richest booty.

On

On the other hand attempts were made to extend the knowledge of what was called Christianity in Jutland and Cimbria, among the Danes and Swedes. The son of Charlemagne imitated his sire in spreading religion by his arms; and the famous Ansgar, with his missionary labourers, seconded his operations, and was rewarded with the Archbishopric of Hamburgh, and the patriarchate of all the North. AN. 831.

AN. 850. Methodius and Cyril, two Greek monks, penetrated through Mæsia and Bulgaria, as far as Bohemia and Moravia; and without the arm of power seem to have been successful missionaries. From them the present Moravian Church traces its descent; though men of a superior spirit to their founders, yet these from the beginning, resisted the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiffs, and contended with success for their own rites and ceremonies, sufficiently indeed superstitious.

AN. 867. The Russians and Slavonians received also from Constantinople a company of missionaries, who succeeded in sowing the seeds of Christianity among them, though the progress was not probably great. And it must be owned, that all these converts in general were as little instructed in the true principles of Christian doctrine as examples of Christian practice. A superficial profession admitted

mitted them to baptism, often under the sword of the conqueror, to please their chieftains, or to secure some advantage : and the missionaries themselves displayed the first efforts of their zeal to gain subjects to the see of Rome, rather than proselytes to true religion ; indulged them in their own superstitious practices, and only gave them a Christian name and form : easily satisfied with the slightest conformity to the profession and formalities of the reigning system of Christianity ; so that the difference between the pagan before and the Christian convert afterwards, respecting all that deserves that name, was scarcely perceptible.

The Nestorians continued their efforts among the Tartars, and spread the knowledge of Christianity far into the wilds of Scythia : but the accounts of their progress is very indistinct.

On the whole, though many attempts were made, without much attention to the most proper and apostolic means to spread Christianity among the northern savage nations, the cause rather declined ; and the Saracens, Othmans and Normans, gained more than the missionaries, whether by the sword or persuasion ; so that the outward state of the Church appears equally calamitous and declining.

CHAP. II.

INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

THOUGH in the East a much more considerable share of literature was maintained than in the West, the progress of ignorance was abundantly deplorable. The chief use made of science was in useless and unprofitable disputes, to which Aristotle most especially contributed, and was therefore studied with particular attention. The knowledge of divine truth, and of the Scriptures, was lost in fanciful allegory and hidden senses, discoverable only by fanatic imagination. The monks multiplied and maintained their reputation for sanctity. The contentions for power, and particularly for the sees of Rome and Constantinople, were bitter, and often bloody. The change of Emperors filled the East with tumult; and the changes of patriarchs were more common, as the Emperors exercised their power in deposing and raising such as they pleased. The clergy, whose only object seemed to be the enriching and exalting the sacerdotal order, abandoned themselves to the most shameful licentiousness: whoever reads Agobard, and the canons passed for reformation of manners, must be shocked to observe the offences committed.

committed. Thus, though the Mahomedans were spreading over Asia, and approaching with gigantic strides the Thracian Bosphorus, the decay of all religion loosened the bands of society, and neither danger nor misery led men to repentance. The Christian Church exhibited only a putrid carcase ready for the eagles to prey upon. Vast provinces were utterly separated from the dominion of the Grecian Emperors, Egypt, Africa, Syria, Arabia, great part of Asia, all fallen under the Saracenic yoke, and filled with apostates to Mahomedism.

In the West, religion bore an aspect as hideous, and ignorance more profound prevailed. As to enrich the Church was the most essential act of piety, and the surest way to cancel all crimes, and open the gates of purgatory and of heaven, the superstitious, from the highest to the lowest, laboured to commute for their sins, and to share their wealth and possessions with their clerical mediators; and these so ignorant, they could scarcely read the offices of devotion; and so profligate, that their examples were still more fatal to the flock; whilst the idea that they held the keys of paradise, made the senseless multitude look up to them with a veneration approaching to adoration. All things conspired to destroy every principle of Christian grace: many bishops, by their tenures become feudal barons, were called into the field with their

military tenants; lived in all the luxury and criminal indulgences of courts and camps; and were the same men in the rochet, as in the coat of mail. Their dioceses and clergy neglected, followed their pernicious examples, to which the private patrons of ecclesiastical preferments contributed, by bestowing their benefices on priests like themselves, from whom they should be subject to no rebuke for their crimes, and obtain an easier absolution, as they shared their rapine, luxury, sports and drunkenness.

The heads of the Church at Rome still exceeded in corruption the inferior members; uniformly pursuing the one object of encreasing their power, extending their jurisdiction, and drawing to themselves all the wealth they could collect from the most distant provinces by every means, they rose fast to that altitude of station in the western world, where for a long while enthroned in the temple of God, they shewed themselves as God, dictating to a prostrate world. Though some of these pontiffs were men of letters and decent, multitudes of them (for the succession was rapid) were marked with the most atrocious crimes, as may be seen in every history of the day; and not an individual displayed a single trace of the mind of Christ, or his Spirit, though they assumed the character of his

vicar

vicar or vicegerent. Whether one of them was a woman in disguise, hardly deserves the noise which has been raised about it. AN. 855.

Careful to improve every opportunity of rising to pre-eminence, they employed all their wealth and influence. Unable wholly to emancipate themselves from imperial dominion, under those Emperors of the West, who held the reins of government with a vigorous grasp, they failed not to make continual encroachments on the feeble; and to endeavour to usurp dominion over those to whom they were but subjects. As the successors of Charlemagne declined in power and authority, the Popes rose in their pretensions; and when civil wars broke out among competitors for the empire, they failed not to improve the opportunity of procuring fresh privileges, by casting their weight into the scale, which would make it preponderate, till they assumed the right of bestowing the imperial crown; and this too purchased by presents immense, as well as promises of the most filial obedience.

AN. 876. Confusion upon confusion embroiling the western empire, the multitude of candidates, who struggled for the imperial throne, bid against each other at Rome for the papal suffrage and unction, which were procured by the richest gifts, and the most abject concessions.

The princes thus raised by Romish influence, contributed all their power to establish the pontiff's dominion; and as their claims were boundless, they now endeavoured to support their universal omnipotence in every thing relative to religion. They denied even to *councils* the power of determining any matter of doctrine or discipline, but with their consent and approbation. The whole body of prelacy was subjugated to them, as alone deriving their authority from the pontiffs of Rome, the successors of Peter, the representative of Christ, and the only visible head of his Church upon earth. And though these unscriptural pretensions roused many a defendant of the prelatical order against such insolent usurpations, the power and intrigues of the Roman see prevailed, aided by the grossest forgeries of pretended decretals and AN. 814. councils, which men were too ignorant then to detect, or too feeble to resist. In vain the French bishops remonstrated, and wished to support their expiring liberties. The perseverance, power and craft of the pontiffs, especially of Nicholas the first, triumphed over all opposition; and those who could not be convinced, were at least compelled to be silent. Thus by a subjugation of the ministers of Christianity in every region to a foreign pontiff, a great step was still gained to claims of universal rule; and monarchs as well as people bowed down to pontifical dominion.

To

To this the legions of monks also, universally dispersed, contributed their utmost powers. They were the devoted partisans of the Roman see; and grown into such credit, as well as multiplied in number, that kings and princes renounced the world to retire to monasteries, and end their days in these holy solitudes, as the sure mode of redeeming their souls from all former abominations: and such was the folly and superstition of the times, that they who had not the heart to renounce their dignities and grandeur, when living, clothed themselves in the monk's cowl when dying, in hope of thus associating themselves to some share of the merit of that holy fraternity. These all strengthened the hands, and supported the most extravagant claims of Rome, nor did the profligacy of their lives seem to diminish the veneration of the vulgar for the order.

AN. 817. New ranks of canons and canoneſſes, (the first women convents,) were also added to the sacred corps of celibataries, to strengthen the bands of religion, and set a better example to the monks, who had so grievously degenerated from their professed *order*; and which the second Benedict, with high reputation to himself, attempted to revive. His success was of no long duration. The disorder was incorrigible, where abundance of wealth,

and abundance of corruption, opened the flood-gates of impurity and indulgence. AN. 821.

The wretched declension of all religion under such guides, may easily be conceived. The zealous attempts of Charlemagne and his son, to produce some beneficial change by the promotion of literature, and the erection of seminaries, failed of the hoped-for effect, whether through the infelicity of the times, the indolence of the pupils, or the improper method of tuition. Thus, though a few men, such as Scotus, Godeschalcus, and Bertramn, attempted to dispel the ignorance of their contemporaries, the disease was inveterate, and hardly a symptom remained of the benefit of their labours, after their decease. The clergy, ignorant themselves, and the patrons of ignorance, had no desire the people should be instructed. The grosser darkness enveloped their superstitious minds, the easier dupes they were to their sacerdotal directors.

But though all knowledge, christian or scientific, was at the lowest ebb, the veneration for saints was more profound than ever; and the greatest ingenuity of invention was employed in raising up a host of new names; many of them, never till then heard of, whose wondrous lives afforded scope for the most outrageous fictions; which

which were as credulously received, as impudently invented. Each contended for the honour of their adopted patron, and exhausted their imaginations in adorning them with every possible perfection, and lying miracles; and so fast were they multiplied, that it became necessary to prevent the licentiousness of superstition from overstocking the world with more patron saints than there were clients, by restricting the canonization first to provincial councils, and then to the Roman see itself; which contrived to turn this favour to good account, and to be well paid for their sanction.

The precious relics sought after with such avidity, could not fail to be discovered by such interested investigators; and as the most celebrated would attract the most liberal donations, it is impossible to recount the miracles wrought, the devils dispossessed, the diseases of all kinds removed, by these powerful operators. Each vied with their fellows in the transcendent efficacy of their own relics; monastery with monastery, church with church, and priest with priest, trying who could outlie the other, and attract the greatest concourse of deluded votaries. The farther fetched the relics, the more revered, especially if names of apostles and primitive martyrs were affixed to them, and the more numerous and solemnly attested the miracles

racles and cures performed by them, the higher rose the veneration.

The scriptures of truth were buried under the load of fathers, controversialists, and mystics; and more eager to bite and devour one another, than to unite their forces against the common enemies of the faith, the churches of the East and West continued to worry each other about image-worship, the procession of the spirit, and the encroachments of jurisdiction. Ignorance and idolatry at last compleatly triumphed. In the East and West it became established by law.

AN. 879. A new source of contention now arose about the Eucharist, and in *what manner* the body and blood of Christ were present in that sacrament. Superstitious and unscriptural notions had long been gaining ground. A monk, named Paschasius, (for in convents these follies chiefly were invented) pretended, that after consecration, *the form* of the elements only remained, and *the same body*, born of the Virgin, crucified on Calvary, and raised from the dead, was really and locally present. This was opposed by Bertramn, and yet more explicitly by Scotus, who argued that the bread and wine were only *signs* and *symbols* of the *absent* body of the Lord. The controversy has since swollen into a bulk,

a bulk, that presents a fearful monument of human folly. AN. 831.

AN. 847. A more important one was renewed by *Godeschalcus*, respecting the doctrines of predestination and grace. He was a monk of Orbais, in France, where pelagianism was from the beginning deeply rooted. Zealous for the evangelical doctrines, now debased with every alloy, and desirous of reviving the knowledge of the grace of God in truth, he laboured assiduously, under the patronage of Eberald, one of the first nobles in the court of the Emperor Lothaire. He was heard with deep seriousness and attention; even the Bishop of Verona was his auditor; and Remi, archbishop of Lyons, Prudentius, bishop of Troyes, the famous Ratramn, a monk of Corby, Lupus, abbot of Ferrieres, and other men of eminence warmly embraced his opinions. A flame was kindled by his preaching; and his popularity awakened the envy and enmity of Maurus, archbishop of Mentz, before whom he was accused of heresy,

and condemned in a council held in that

AN. 848. city. For punishment he was sent to

Hincmar, his diocesan, archbishop of Rheims, who had ordained him. Hincmar was in league with his brother, the bishop of Mentz, and equally the enemy of this pretended disturber
of

of the Church's peace, and of his person. With him the ablest arguments and unimpeached integrity of Godeschalcus weighed not a hair.

AN. 849. In a council at Quiercy, his condemnation was confirmed with every insult and aggravated injustice. In vain he maintained the truth of his opinions from Augustin, with evidence it was impossible to contradict or deny; and from the Scripture, which his adversaries less respected as authority. It was resolved to punish and silence him. The brutish prelate, the less able he was to answer his arguments, or impeach his fidelity, the more exasperated, without shame resolved to employ the power with which he was invested. He degraded him from the sacerdotal character, exposed him to the public by a severe corporal punishment; and after whipping him till he was covered with a gore of blood, and near expiring, he cast him into a miserable dungeon, where, after years of suffering, he died a martyr for the truths, which no torments could engage him to forsake; though the force of them had compelled him to burn with his own hands the justification of his opinions, which he had presented to the council at Mentz. Into the same fire *he* had probably been cast himself, if he had obstinately refused this sacrifice. But his spirit unbroken with ill-usage, long maintained in the house of his prison
the

the same opinions for which he suffered ; and his latest breath solemnly attested the divine authority of the truth, which living he had defended, and when dying supported him through all his sufferings. Who can read Church History without horror of the abuses of prelatical power ? and this most commonly exercised against the most faithful witnesses, for those very evangelical truths, in pretended support of which these men held their dignities.

But the sufferings of the martyr, as is usually the case, produced effects more powerful probably than his preaching. His doctrines were canvassed ; his defences read ; the cruelty of his enemies awakened compassion, and the divine truth, for which he suffered, found able advocates in the eminent ecclesiastics above mentioned, and many others, who condemned the injustice with which Godeschalcus had been treated, and the unchristian severity of the punishments inflicted on him ; maintaining the opinions which he had promulged as the doctrine of the Church, as that of the Scriptures, and of the best men in every succeeding age ; and defying their enemies to confute their reasonings, or contradict the evidence which they produced. But the party of Hincmar and his associates was, as is the case in general where the truths

truths of vital godliness are the subject of contest, far superior : they had the secular arm, and the prelatical corps on their side ; and Christ and his cause, when it comes before such men, will be sure to meet condemnation. The decrees of the former councils were confirmed, and poor Godeschalvus and his doctrine received a third anathema.

But his gallic friends resolved not to submit to this imperious prelate and his unjust decrees. A

body of bishops, under the archbishop of
AN. 855. Lyons, assembled at Valence in Dau-
phiny, vindicated the condemned monk
and his doctrine ; and fourteen provinces assembled
at Langres, concurred in the same opinion, and
pronounced the eulogium of the faithful witness,
who had now expired in prison under the inhuman
Hincmar. AN. 869.

This contest ended not with the men of that
day, but to our own remains in its full vigour, and
will probably continue to the end of time. The
unhumbled, the unawakened, the pharisaical, the
proud, who entertain high imaginations of the hu-
man powers, and the reasonings of fallen man,
must as inveterately oppose the doctrines of grace
now, as they did of old ; and whenever power is
in the hands of oppressors, and the spirit of the
times

times admits their openly expressing the enmity of their hearts, the same victims to prelatical tyranny will be found as Godeschalcus.

The truths which Godeschalcus maintained, have since found most able defenders in the famed Maguin, and a host of others, who have repelled the false conclusions their adversaries pretended to draw from his premises; and have vindicated the God of all grace from the charges which the ignorant have presumed to cast upon him, as inferences which they suppose deducible from the predestinarian principles. The one book of Edwards, on the Freedom of the Human Will, challenges all the sophistry of unhumbléd reason to answer its arguments.

Mosheim calls this an intricate and incomprehensible subject, where to be silent is the truest wisdom; and so would evade the entering on the most interesting truths of God's revealed word. To the sinner, conscious of his guilt, misery and helplessness, the riches of the grace which is in Jesus Christ, will be neither a subject intricate nor incomprehensible; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge in all its happy and saving effects, will be found the point of highest wisdom; but it is what the wisdom of man never taught,

taught, nor all his proud reasonings ever led to. "The natural man receiveth not the things which be of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Happily the Lord in every age, though they were but few comparatively, taught some the grace of God, which bringeth salvation; and to this day a generation, according to the election of grace, can say, "wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." We are not indeed bound to vindicate Godeschalcus, or any man, in every position they may have laid down, or in every conclusion they have drawn, or rather, which their adversaries have drawn for them: it is sufficient, that "the foundation of God standeth sure; the Lord knoweth those that are his:" whilst each individual who holds the grace of God in truth, feels his obligation to make his own calling and election sure.

As the doctrine of the Trinity hath a near connection with that of predestination and grace, the same Hincmar as bitterly condemned his adversary for the use of that address,—“O God, triune, yet one, we pray,” &c. This he termed *Tritheism*, and condemned as impious heresy. The poor monk from his prison defended the address; which the Benedictines also, in opposition to Hincmar, maintained;

maintained; and in defiance of his anathemas, the form was continued in the churches, and the truth so far prevailed.

The ridiculous controversy about the birth of Christ, and the manner in which his virgin Mother bore him, was suited to the ignorance, folly, and superstition of the times. The worship of this woman had proceeded already to a wondrous height, and she was beginning to be enthroned *Regina Cæli*, Queen of Heaven, throughout the Christian world. As she was supposed to have some peculiar interest in, and authority over the son of her womb, she therefore came in for a large share of monkish devotion and popular adoration.

AN. 858. The bitter quarrels and anathemas mutually hurled from Constantinople against Rome, and from Rome against Constantinople, had for their pretence, the deposition, whether just or unjust, of the patriarch Ignatius, whom the Roman Pontiff espoused. The real cause was the rivalry, ambition, and lust of power in the sees: Rome being glad to seize every occasion to extend her jurisdiction, to gratify her covetousness, and establish her pre-eminence; but fearful and fatal as these long and wretched contests were to the real interests of religion, the particulars would be now

as little entertaining as profitable. The breach of the churches widened : the curses of the West rested on the East, and the curses of the East rested on the West ; and if this had been all the harm done, it would have been like the ridiculous battles of children's pop-guns ; but, *hæ mugæ ad seria ducunt*, the consequences of these contentions weakened both the East and West, the people were the victims of the wickedness and wrath of their rulers, and the enemies of the Church triumphed in her divisions and contentions.

CHAP. III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT, RITES, CEREMONIES, AND
HERESIES OF THE CHURCH.

THE government of the Church was now approaching to despotic, especially in the western world. The Church of Rome attempted to concentrate the whole ecclesiastical power in herself; to which the weakness and divisions of the empire, the craft and intrigues of a succession of wicked pontiffs, and the zeal of the whole monkish order greatly contributed.

The more rites and ceremonies, the more multiplied must be the ministers of the sanctuary, and the more numerous the sacerdotal host, who looked to Rome as the centre of expectation, maintained her power, and were countenanced in all their superstitions. The greatest writers were now wisely and piously employed in explaining the profound mysteries contained in all the farrago of forms and ceremonies, which had overwhelmed the devotion of the Christian world. We blush at the recital of the follies practised, as at the ridiculous reasons given for them; but to the credulous multitude they acquired a higher veneration, under the sanc-

tion and explanations of Scotus, Remigius, Amalarius, and others, whose eminence in wisdom and literature stamped the highest authority on these fooleries.

As new saints multiplied, invention was racked to find new offices and rites appropriate to each. And as every one vied in zeal for their peculiar patrons, altars, images, vestments, processions, and masses accumulated. The account is the most degrading history of human imbecillity.

And what added to the infelicity of these inventions, new ceremonies were enacted, and introduced into *civil life*, and made the criteria of virtue and innocence. Thus the different ordeals by fire, water, and the cross, now came into practice; and that dreadful and most anti-christian appeal to God by single combat: the probable origin of the modern duel; and horrible to tell, the Pope and clergy sanctified all these abuses, by the introduction of the most sacred solemnities on the occasion, even to the celebration of the holy sacrament, to add the greater dignity to these delusions. Their own gain, interest, and advantage were sure not to be forgotten on these occasions.

Heresy continued to sharpen the edge of controversy. The former ones still subsisted, though
contests

contests of other kinds rather diverted the attention from them. The Nestorians fostered under the Saracenic wing, multiplied in Egypt, Persia, and wherever the Mahomedan power prevailed; so that their churches in these countries were by far the most numerous. But another sect, the *Paulicians*, whose tenets have been before described, after alternate persecution and toleration, maintained their ground, and awakened the jealousy and enmity of the Grecian prelates and their Emperor: which broke out in the most bloody and savage persecutions, to reduce them to conformity with the established Church. Driven to despair by their oppressors, and provoked by their cruelty to self-defence, sure of death if they refused to abandon their principles, and having nothing more to fear in the maintainance of them, they resolved to find safety in rebellion; and after many a furious conflict with their enemies, in which they often retaliated upon their persecutors the cruelties which they had inflicted, they retired into the dominions of the Saracens, and found protection under the crescent, from the fury of those who pretended to fight under the cross.

AN. 845. An interval of peace invited them back to their former habitations in Armenia, when that wicked and furious Theodora, who governed during the minority of her son, fell upon them with

implacable fury, and compelled them, after the confiscation of a hundred thousand families, and the most barbarous murders and torments inflicted on the captives, to seek refuge again under the Mahomedan government. Those who escaped were received by the Saracens with great cordiality, and settled in the frontier city of Tibrice, from whence they issued forth on the adjacent Grecian provinces and wasting them with fire and sword, avenged as men, not as Christians, the inhuman murders of their brethren.

To draw the line of comparison between the contenders, respecting their principles or practice, is difficult, as we have all our materials from one party, and that of the persecutors; yet two things are evident, that they would have been faithful subjects, and strengthened the hands of government, had they been permitted to live in peace: and I cannot call that rebellion, where men driven to the last extremities have no alternative but death, or profession of what they regard as false religion. Whatever condemnable excesses follow, at the door of the oppressors and persecutors will the guilt and blood be laid.

As to the points of heresy laid to their charge, if we possessed their own vindication, we should hear probably a different account from the gross errors

errors imputed to them. Of this we are sure even from the acknowledgments of their enemies, that (with exception to the Epistles of St. Peter, which it is said they rejected; for what reasons, or whether true, we are in the dark,) they zealously inculcated the authority of the scriptures of the New Testament, and sharply condemned the Grecian priests, for retaining them from the people. They renounced also all proud distinctions, and reduced their pastors to a more primitive equality; of all crimes the greatest in the eyes of prelatical arrogance: and instead of worshipping the Virgin Mary, and the wood of the cross, they treated with contempt these false mediums of idolatry, and only adored the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he had sent. Probably in many points they may have been erroneous; but no true Protestant, or true Christian, can hesitate a moment in the decision, with whom the most dangerous errors and heresies were found, and whether Greeks or Paulicians held the most essential truths of the faith of Christ.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE CHURCH.

AFFLICTED with these miserable scenes, I look around for the true Church of the redeemed, whose names are written in heaven. And I feel no reluctance to go into the prison of Godefrigus, and to the few that espoused his cause, and the truths for which he suffered, for my brethren in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. I should visit also the valleys of Piedmont and Pais de Vaud, and the adjacent regions of the gallic dominion; and hope to find in the sequestered village the faithful pastor, and the humble flock, contaminated perhaps with some of the prevailing superstitions, but maintaining the truth as it is in Jesus, and possessing the life of God in their souls. One character of distinguished eminence, whose diocese extended over Piedmont, Claudius, bishop of Turin, made a resolute stand against many of the abominations of the Roman pontiffs. His writings contain more evangelical truth than perhaps any other of that day; and the vilest abuse and opposition which he received from Rome and her partisans, speak the fidelity with which

which he supported the doctrines which he believed. To him some suppose the Waldenses are chiefly indebted for the purity of the Gospel, of which they afterwards became such faithful witnesses ; and if, as is asserted, their origin was more ancient, they could not but flourish and be encouraged under his administration. AN. 820.

The churches in Bohemia and Moravia, planted by Cyril, subsisted, renouncing the jurisdiction of Rome, and worshipping God, if not without superstitious rites, yet more in spirit and in truth than others. Indeed, those most removed from the scenes of pride, contention, wealth, and ambition, would probably be most preserved from evil, by their poverty and seclusion from the world,

I should expect to find in Britain a race to serve him, and the Cambrian mountains not destitute of the traces of primitive religion. Thither many Christians had retired from the ravages of the Danes. And I should hope when the great Alfred recovered the kingdom, restored order, and erected the University of Oxford, to revive religious knowledge and literature, fallen into the deepest decay, some sparks of truth still survived amidst the reign of ignorance and superstition. AN. 872.

The

The famous Ansgar manifested in his missionary zeal the flame that burned in his own bosom, and those of his Anglo-Saxon associates. And there is every reason to conclude, that among his numerous converts some real Christians would be found.

AN. 827. Angilbertus, Bishop of Milan, stoutly resisted the papal claims. Whether he approved of the things truly excellent is more dubious.

The Nestorians appear not to have declined in zeal; and under a liberal toleration, without royal revenues, to have maintained a greater portion of the gospel purity than their fellow Christians, who excommunicated them.

Nor can I doubt, but among the persecuted Paulicians, and their pastors, men of real Christian simplicity would be found. The persecuted and the suffering professors of Christianity, to every man who knows its real nature, have many presumptive evidences in their favour.

But in the East and in the West the scriptures were still open to the inspection of all. And amidst the scandalous contentions that made the men of that day distinguished, piety and purity were not utterly lost in the world: some real Christians were
found

found in the retirement of private life, or inferior stations in the Church ; nor will I utterly exclude a solitary here and there, even in monastic seclusion, who loved and served a pardoning God, perhaps with much darkness of view, or conformity to established superstitions, but yet with sincerity and truth. The triumphant demand of an outward visible Church will be despised by every man who is acquainted in his own soul with the nature of true Christianity.

CENTURY X.

CHAP. I.

ON THE STATE OF THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

THE Ottoman power prevailing over the Saracenic in the East, the conquerors adopted the religion of the vanquished, and continued their desolations over the remnant of Christianity which subsisted in their dominions. Oppression and persuasion, the alternative of loss of all things, or a prosperous civil establishment prevailed; and their converts were multiplied equal to their conquests.

AN. 842—912. For a while the barbarous Normans continued their devastations, but becoming fixed in France, and more humanised, they at last received the Christianity then taught, and a gallic Queen engaged the famous Rollo to submit to baptism, and his warriors followed his example.

AN. 965. A like event produced a similar effect in Poland, where a daughter of the Duke of Bohemia

mia persuaded her uxorious husband to adopt her religion as his own; and to recommend it to his subjects. A host of monkish missionaries rushed into the battle under the royal patronage, but as they were ignorant of the language, and not very deeply furnished with the weapons of conviction, the impatient Queen engaged her spouse to take a shorter way, and compel his reluctant subjects to bow their necks to the episcopal yoke, and receive baptism from the bishops and archbishops, and the host of clergy, which issued from the court into the provinces. The nature of such conversions we deplore, whilst we record them.

AN. 987. As if this was to be the age of female missionaries, a third grand conversion of a more famed empire followed the marriage of the sister of the Grecian Emperor with the Russian Duke Wlodomir. The Christianity which had been preached in the former century, had produced in Russia very little effects of a permanent nature. The Duke and his subjects were still pagan. Ann persuaded her husband Wlodomir, who took the baptismal name of Basilus, to embrace Christianity. His subjects followed the example of their sovereign, and became generally, in their own account at least, true believers. The Duke and Duchess, who lie at Kiovia, stand high in the order of canonised

nised Russians ; and receive the worship due to such eminent saints to this day. Though it must be acknowledged the brutal character of Basilus favoured nothing of beatification.

Hungary, which had before received some glimmerings of Christianity became more enlightened. To this nothing contributed so powerfully as the marriage of Sarolta with Geysa, the Hungarian monarch. She was the daughter of Gylas, a barbarian chieftain, who having been baptised at Constantinople had established the profession of Christianity on the banks of the Danube. In their son's reign, the work became general ; churches and bishoprics were every where erected, and conversion to nominal Christianity at least was universal through the kingdom. AN. 950 to 1000.

AN. 948. Harold of Denmark, conquered rather by the sword of Otho than the arguments of Poppon, and his lying miracles, consented with his subjects to become Christians, that they might possess their independence as a nation. His son Sueno apostatized ; but adversity brought him back to the Christian profession, and Providence restoring him to his kingdom, he became a zealous advocate for Christianity.

Norway,

Norway, after long resistance to her monarchs, in rejecting the Christian profession, at last submitted to the strong arm of Olaus; who finding all other methods ineffectual, visited his provinces with an army capable of commanding obedience, and with apostles to baptise the multitude, who were driven to the font, and received the sign of the Cross. The English missionaries were the active instruments, and their zeal carried them to the Orkney islands, to Iceland, and even Groenland, where they planted the standard of the Cross.

AN. 936—948. No man distinguished himself in zeal for Christianity beyond Otho, surnamed the *Great*, Emperor of Germany. To secure the obedience of the Germans to the faith, who were yet half pagan, he established a variety of bishoprics, which he richly endowed. He supported with all his influence the prelates, whom he placed in these different sees; and erecting schools in various parts of his dominions, he beheld a general submission to his will, and the profession of the Christian religion throughout his dominions. His bounty fell in showers on churches and monasteries, in which the Empress abundantly seconded his liberalities. And if the clergy did not do their duty, it was not for want of being well paid for it. Some have justly doubted, whether this superstitious profusion did not more harm than good: but when a monarch had

had been taught that these things were the most effectual means for *the redemption of his soul*, we shall the less wonder at his munificence, though we may pity his ignorance and superstition.

AN. 999. And now first the tocsin of holy war was sounded by Sylvester against the Saracens, which, however ineffectual to waken up the dormant zeal, and kindle the enthusiasm of that generation, prepared the way for the crusaders in the next.

CHAP. II.

ON THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

AN. **T**HE progress of learning in the East had
911. not utterly ceased, and one of the Emperors, Constantine Porphyrogeneta, gave a noble example to his subjects, if they could have been recovered to the love of science and literature: but the time was past. A dissolute clergy, wallowing in wealth, despised the toils of laborious investigation, and rather chose, enthroned in ignorance, to maintain dominion over the enslaved consciences of men. Even imperial patronage produced no material alteration, and the very helps which he afforded by causing extracts to be made from the most valuable authors, brought the originals themselves into neglect.

Happily the Saracens continued to advance rapidly in the cultivation of all the sciences, to which, under the celebrated Caliph of Babylon and Egypt, Abdallah, in the last century, they had addicted themselves. In the East, the famous schools of Bagdad and Bassora flourished, and knowledge was propagated by them through Africa into Spain, where the mathematics, philosophy, physic, and the

muses flourished, as no where else in Europe: thither all the Christians resorted, who sought improvement, and wished to emancipate themselves from the ignorance which prevailed.

Though all knowledge was not quite extinct in the West, the number of those who had the least pretensions to learning, was astonishingly small; and these had chiefly derived it from the Saracenic schools: for the science cultivated in the Christian seminaries under monkish tuition, was trivial and puerile in the highest measure, and served only to foster the prevailing superstitions. Gerbert, a native of France, at the close of the century, being elected Pope under the name of Sylvester II. endeavoured to rouse the expiring spark into a flame. He had been a pupil at Cordoua, and instructed in the various branches of science, and owed to his Arabian tutors a considerable knowledge of the mathematics, for those days. He published a little elementary treatise, to make plain the first lines of geometry. But in that superstitious age, the very diagrams he drew, exposed him to the charge of being a magician, and though a Pope, he was accused of dealing with the devil.

The profligacy and ignorance of the clergy must in any other state of things have rendered them despicable and detested, but in that day the veneration

ration for their sacred character was so established, and the people such dupes to their pious frauds and pretensions, that the grossest abominations in the highest order of prelates passed off without revolting. It is said of Theophylact, the Grecian patriarch, that his stud of two thousand horses was fed with grapes and pistacho nuts, steeped in the most exquisite wines; and that news being brought him of a favourite mare having foaled, as he was celebrating high mass on Holy Thursday, he left the ceremony unfinished to run to the stable, and caress his darling and her progeny, and then returned to finish the service. To support these unclerical sports of dogs and horses, and all their expensive apparatus, he sold all ecclesiastical benefices in his disposal; a traffic too common in those days.

His brethren at Rome during this century kept him well in countenance ; where a succession of the most wretched, profligate, avaricious, and abandoned of mankind filled the holy see ; whose histories are a disgrace, not only to the Christian name, but to human nature. I only mention *John*

the tenth, Archbishop of Ravenna, raised
AN. 914. to the see by Theodora, his mother-in-
law, with whom he continued an in-
cestuous intercourse: murdered by Marozia, who
shortly after filled the papal chair with her own
L 2 bastard,

bastard, *John XI.* the fruit of adultery
AN. 931. with *Sergius* the third. Degraded for
his crimes, and renewing his contests
with the Emperor, he died miserably. The elec-
tion of his successor, *Otho* disapproved, dethroned
him, and carried him away captive, where
AN. 963. he expired in exile. It would be tedious
to follow the succession of such men, as
well as useless; what the state of religion must be
in the world, under their government, may be
more easily supposed than described.

Yet the grandeur and exaltation of the see was
never forgotten, and every Pope failed not to seize
the favourable moment to attach all power to the
Church, and to extend their pretensions over Kings
and Emperors, as well as their own clergy. Their
parasites and partisans maintained their right of
dominion universally, and that all episcopal autho-
rity, though divine in its original, could only be
conveyed through *St. Peter* and his successors in
the papal chair.

To compensate for what they lost by these exor-
bitant claims, the greater ecclesiastics endeavoured
to enlarge the bounds of their authority; to eman-
cipate themselves and their clergy from all secular
jurisdiction, and to claim the civil as well as eccle-
siastical

fiastical authority, in the cities where they dwelt, and the diocesess over which they presided. In many of which, the Kings and Emperors connived at their encroachments, reverencing their character, and perhaps politically presuming upon their influence with the people, to establish their own more peaceable dominion, preferring temporary prelates to hereditary ambitious nobles.

Men living in luxury of every kind, and professing celibacy, could not but sink into the depth of impurity; and they who *might not* have wives, maintained a more expensive haram of mistresses: for these the treasures of the Church were squandered, and no difficulty made of purchasing lucrative ecclesiastical offices, or selling those at their disposal, to supply the cravings of lewdness and extravagance.

Deplorable indeed are the records of the times; and the ecclesiastics, the examples of every abomination. Odo, a monk of Clugni, and afterwards abbot, endeavoured to restore the monastic discipline; and raised his own reputation for sanctity to the highest pitch of eminence: but if his reformation bore any similitude to his works, which remain, stuffed with the most puerile observances and debasing superstitions, we shall not augur highly of the reformer or the reformed.

With regard to all scriptural criticism or attempt to diffuse the knowledge of the Divine oracles, such works of that age as I have ever heard mentioned, were I believe never once consulted by any man of the present day, or any subject of sacred literature.

The conflicts of St. Dunstan with the AN. 960. devil ; and Simeon the patriarch's lives of the saints, afford a mortifying specimen of the spirit of the times. The great and precious promises of the word of God were all sunk into oblivion ; and even divine worship turned from the true Jehovah to numberless new mediators and saints, many of them the creative produce of monkish imagination. No man thought of addressing God without having secured a patron saint ; lighted up some candles before a favourite image, or bought the Virgin Mary over to support him by some present or oblation.

But though the clergy had little theological science, they were well trained in all the tricks of priestcraft ; and knew how to make the fire of purgatory a crucible of gold, to melt down the riches of the laity. From the torments of this fearful purification, enforced by all the most terrific oratory, men were glad to redeem themselves, or abridge their sufferings for a thousand years, or so, at as good a rate, as they could purchase the necessary

cessary masses, or procure the superabundant merit of some eminent saint.

Nor was it a small addition to this sacerdotal engine of wealth and influence, as this century advanced, to apply the book of Revelations, as foretelling the approach of Anti-christ and of the general judgment ready to commence at the expiration of the first thousand years. As all sub-lunary possessions could then be of little avail, the clergy failed not to improve the moment of expectation; and multitudes, to secure some merit against that awful time, bequeathed all their estates and wealth to the Church and her ministers, expressly assigning the reason, "*appropinquante mundi termino,*" *the end of all things being at hand.* And so far had this delusion spread, that the noblest edifices were suffered to run to decay and tumble down, because repairs would so soon be useless. Many conveyed their lands and property, and with them subjugated their persons to the ministers of religion and the monasteries, hoping greater favour from Christ on account of this relation to him: whilst others marched off for Palestine, leaving all behind them for holy uses, expecting Christ's descent there, and a more favourable reception from him, as the reward of their laborious pilgrimage to Jerusalem. If the evidences did not remain of

such egregious folly, they would hardly be credited.

The saints continued to replenish the earth with objects of devotion. A very small measure of extraordinary austerity and strictness, procured for the living the title, and at their death the worship; but the long departed saints afforded a more abundant harvest. Not that it seemed a matter of importance, whether they had ever lived or not, provided a revered name could be affixed to a bone, or a putrid corpse, an extraordinary tale invented, and a number of legendary miracles affirmed; the relic was adored. Such was the dreadful aspect of Christendom.

CHAP. III.

ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT, RITES AND
CEREMONIES.

INCREASING power continued to raise the fee of Rome to the great object of its ambition, *universal supremacy*, a title St. Gregory had branded in the patriarch of Constantinople, three centuries before, as proud, heretical, blasphemous, and diabolical. Many bishops disputed the exorbitant pretensions of the pontiffs, and many nations refused implicit obedience to their decrees. These continued to be enforced by craft or violence, as circumstances dictated; always so managing the contest, as ultimately to gain some acquisition of wealth or dominion to the papal see.

The same cause produced the same effects. The ritual swelled with the continual additions made to the saints and relics. New forms, new festivals, new ceremonies, were invented; and it must be confessed, however stupidly ignorant of the Scriptures, at this work the clergy were not a little dexterous. The genuflexions, and bowings, and prostrations, were multiplied, varied; and every corporeal

corporeal mark of homage to God Almighty, and his faintly ministers, courted them to be propitious to the suits of the petitioners.

But the service of the Virgin began to grow into especial repute, and as she was supposed to have the first influence in heaven, celebrating masses to her honour, and multiplying devotions in her name, became a favourite service. A beautiful *rosary* and *crown* were now invented, consisting of vociferous repetitions of particular prayers. The first contained a powerful round, of fifteen repetitions of the Lord's prayer, and one hundred and fifty ave-marias ; and the latter of seven times repeating the Lord's prayer, and seven times ten salutations of the Virgin. It required, indeed, a good memory to keep the account ; but a number of beads strung on catgut, or a cord, the size also of which had some virtue, and exhibiting a vast necklace, ingeniously provided for the task, by dropping a bead at every prayer and salutation, so that they might not cheat the Virgin of the tale, nor impose on themselves the trouble of supernumerary offices. That men could invent such fooleries, and popes confirm the sanctity and availableness of such *offices*, is among the most striking monuments of superstitious ignorance, and sacerdotal imposition.

CHAP. IV.

HERESIES AND DISPUTES.

THE Nestorians and Monothelites being now chiefly under the Mahomedan government, and the Paulicians reduced and transported to Thrace, these controversies greatly subsided. One *Leutard*, a Frenchman, in the diocese of Chalons, endeavoured to revive the dispute about images, against which he vented his fury, even on a crucifix : and declaiming against tythes and sacerdotal impositions, he soon brought the bishop on his back ; and, being exposed to public shame, is reported in despair to have thrown himself into a well. He however had followers, who are supposed to have joined the sect of the Albigenses, afterwards more notorious. These and some other trifling sectaries hardly deserve mention.

More important were the disputes between the eastern and western churches for jurisdiction. And what particularly agitated the western world, the controversies were still kept up between the Pelagians and the followers of Godeschalcus ; and between the Sacramentarians, who maintained the
real

real presence, and those who admitted the elements to be *only symbols* of Christ's body. As the Church had not yet juridically decided on those points, the disputants proceeded in the contest, and each held his own opinion unmolested, though he was unable to convince his antagonist. The seeds however were sown, from which in some future day a blessed harvest should arise ; and though the empire of superstition generally prevailed, there were not wanting men, who maintained the fundamentals of gospel truth, and lived by faith in the intelligent and sanctified use of divine ordinances.

CHAP. V.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

I HAVE scarce a tittle to add to the account given of the last century. The same persons and people appear to be the depositaries of sacred truth, and the living monuments of the grace of God. A few may be culled out of the general body of the Church, as flowers out of a garden overgrown with weeds; and these, suffering from the contiguity of such bad neighbours, though rendered more observable by the barrenness and disfigured appearance of the wilderness around them. Such were Unni, Nilus, and Gisfelbert. Yet after the most inquisitive search into their works, the flowers themselves are so scentless, that they are scarce worth gathering. Small indeed, and contracted does the pale of the true Church appear; dispersed throughout the world in some favoured individuals, who were chosen, and called, and faithful; but the congregations of such, I fear, were thinly scattered, and scarcely any where so perceivable as to be pointed out to human observation. Probably their insignificance was their protection, and their sequestered abodes their preservative from the enmity

mity of persecutors, and the bigotry of the superstitious. A part of France and Switzerland, of Bohemia and Moravia, with the countries under the Saracenic dominion, where the Nestorians and Paulicians had taken refuge, afforded the principal living specimens of real religion. The followers of the good Godeschalcus and Claudius, with the purity of doctrine, experienced, I presume, the effects of the grace for which they contended. The vital spark remained unextinguished, though its light and heat were grown almost imperceptible.

CENTURY XI.

CHAP. I.

ON THE STATE OF THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

THIS century began the bloody struggle between the western world and the Mahomedan conquerors; an event which, however blazoned in history, I know not whether I shall number with the victories or desolations of the outward Church. SILVESTER II. had published his piteous fictitious epistle from the Church at Jerusalem to the western world: and though a shew of zeal had been excited to rescue the Christians from the Ottoman yoke, the fever subsided quickly, and the republic of Pisa only armed in the cause. But now the Roman pontiffs took up the sinking interests of Christianity in the East, and GREGORY VII. founded the alarm of war through the nations of Europe. Quarrels more nearly interesting him with the Emperor Henry, suspended the preparations, and for a while deferred the attack; till PETER, *the hermit*, roused with his fanatic harangues, the slumbering zeal of the Christian princes and prelates, and became

came the tool of URBAN II. to carry into execution this favourite plan of the papal see. Having visited the desolated plains of Palestine, and beheld the proud crescent displayed on mosques, once famed for Christian sanctuaries, Peter had returned with a burning imagination of the wrongs done to the cross; and painting with most pathetic eloquence the scenes he had witnessed, kindled a flame, which burst forth as a volcano. At first indeed he solicited the patriarch of Constantinople, and the crafty Urban in vain. But when the latter saw the wide spreading effects of the hermit's oratory, seconded by a letter which he produced, sent down to him expressly from heaven by an angel, to call the nations to the battle, there could be no longer resistance or delay to execute the divine mandate.

AN. 1095. A council, called at Placentia by Urban, received, however, at first, the proposal but coldly. The cautious spirit of Italians was not up to the perilous enterprize: but the zealous pontiff, undismayed with difficulties and opposition, renewed the attack at Clermont, the following year, in a second grand assembly, where the valorous spirit of the Franks, proud of deeds of chivalry, and full of zeal for holy Church, met the most sanguine wishes of their spiritual head; heard his
pathetic

pathetic discourses with all the mingled enthusiasm of the love of war, and zeal for religion ; and enlisted by millions under the banner of the cross.

I mean not to trace the madness, the miseries, or the conquests of the crusaders. Suffice it merely to say, that after various attempts, and armies after armies, perishing on the road, destroying the Christian countries through which they passed, and themselves by their excesses, one portion of them under the famous Godfrey, succeeded in the object of their enterprize : and conquering a part of Syria and Palestine, founded the kingdom of Jerusalem : obtained at a rate of blood and treasure, unspeakably greater than would have peopled a nobler dominion, and purchased a richer principality : but two things served to render this conquest transcendently valuable in the eyes of the Christian conquerors—the supposed honour of their Master recovered, in the expulsion of the Saracens from the land of his nativity ; and the cleansing the holy sepulchre from their profanations : and added to this, the abundance of inestimably precious relics, some found, and some purchased of Turks, Jews, and Syrians, and brought back to Europe in holy triumph.

Whether fanatic zeal, or deep laid policy to encrease their power and accumulate wealth, actuated the Roman pontiffs, or both, certain it is, that whether previously designing it or not, from the beginning, they failed not to make their profit of the prevailing madness of the times. The depopulation occasioned by the departure of many hundreds of thousands of the best blood of Europe, left whole provinces desolated, and their noblest defenders saw their native land no more. To equip themselves for this expedition, princes, nobles, and people, parted with their territories, dukedoms, and whatever they possessed; which were mortgaged and sold, to the utter impoverishment of their families: and a change was made in the state of Europe, which the see of Rome craftily turned to its own advantage. The riches accumulated in churches and monasteries, where the greatest abundance of the precious metals were found, obtained advantageous purchases from these adventurers, and added to the pious donations for *the redemption of their souls*, amazingly encreased the possessions of the Church.

The profligacy of manners which prevailed among the crusaders; the rapes, murders, plunder, and desolation, that marked their track, were wretched specimens of the holiness of their purposes;

poses; and they who could inflict such miseries on their fellow Christians, must have borne against the Saracens a spirit as infuriate as the cause which stimulated them was fanatic, and reconcileable to no laws of human justice. Yet scarcely a man in that day doubted the lawfulness of the enterprize; nay, its meritoriousness was the constant topic, which resounded in every pulpit; sanctioned by the solemn absolution from all sins, granted by the representative of St. Peter, to such as might fall in this glorious expedition: and at least securing to them a place in the highest heavens, should they never live to enter the promised land. Thus every thing contributed to excite and continue the infatuation of the western world. As for the East, trembling with the fear of their friends, much more than of their enemies, they were obliged to keep a watchful eye at home, and to guard their own territories from the ravages or surprise of the warrior pilgrims, who were very little delicate on this behalf.

AN. 1077. But Jerusalem was not the noblest conquest of the Christian warriors from the Saracenic dominion. A valiant Norman, Robert Guiscard, had subdued the dukedom of Apuglia, and with his equally famous brother Roger, his companion in the enterprize, had received baptism, and submitted to the dominion of the Roman pon-

tiff. Liberal in the gifts of kingdoms, to which he had no shadow of right or claim, the Pope offered to confer on him the crown of Sicily, if he would but jeopard himself in measuring spears with the Mahomedan conquerors, and recover that beautiful island to the Christian pale, and obedience to the Roman see. Robert accepted the invitation, and accomplished the expulsion of the Saracens; and as his reward received the investiture of this new acquisition, and was crowned king of Sicily, with privileges that have ever since been matter of bitter contest. The Christian religion, which had been nearly extinct, he revived; and according to the pious ideas of the times, founded bishoprics, abbeys, and churches in abundance, with revenues truly princely.

BOLESLAUS of Poland, boasts of equal conquests in the North, where, along the borders of the Baltic, from Mecklingburg to Russia, a number of barbarous nations, Vandals, Prussians, and Slavonians, still continued in the darkness of paganism. Adelbert, bishop of Prague, prompted by his zeal, is reported to have lost his life among them by a pagan priest; and as the labours of the apostolic missionaries had proved abortive, the Polish monarch resolved to employ more effectual weapons; and entering the country with an army which they were unable to resist, he compelled the reluctant
brutes

brutes to bow their necks to the Christian yoke, and receive baptism from the priests who attended him in the expedition. He left with them these instructors to inform their minds, under a famed missionary, name Boniface ; but they fell sacrifices to the rage and enmity of their catechumens, and it was long before the deep rooted practices of paganism were utterly extirpated.

Far nobler conquests are said to be effected by persuasion, through the labours of zealous apostles among the remaining tribes of Russians, Poles, Danes, and Hungarians, who still adhered to the pagan superstitions. But of all the missionary efforts to propagate the Christian religion, none seem to be more effectual, and to be founded on purer principles, than those of the Nestorians in the East, who penetrated still farther into Asia, and spread the knowledge of the truth among the vast hordes of northern Tartars.

Yet, in the East and West, Christianity lost nearly as much as it appeared to gain. The Turks and Saracens still contending for dominion, inflicted the most abundant sufferings on the Christians, which ever side prevailed. The Grecian empire, weakened by civil and religious discord, presented a feeble barrier against their inroads, and province after province was separated from the Christian

pale. And wherever their power prevailed, their religion became little less triumphant. The severity of their tributary exactions on the one hand, and the desire of procuring advancement and property on the other, tempted too many to submit to the profession of Mahomedism, and blend their interest and religion with the prevailing party. It is always a mighty argument to swim with the stream, and to do as others. Thus the populous nations under the Turkish and Saracenic governments generally apostatized from the confession of the faith, and adopted the crescent for the cross.

The same causes produced the same effects in Spain, and every territory under the Mahomedan government: and there was every reason to apprehend the extirpation of the faith in that country, had not a little band of Christians, rallying round their petty king, Pelagius, maintained their expiring cause, and ultimately extended their conquests in the recovery of their country.

CHAP. II.

INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE History of the Church in these unhappy ages resembles the roll of Ezekiel, filled with lamentation and mourning and woe. The external state, even where apparently prosperous, exhibits but a fallacious prosperity. The conversions scarce deserve the name, and correspond too sadly with the means by which they were produced; and all within the bosom of the Church was corrupt, and become abominable—a cage of unclean birds. In the East, the rapidity of revolutions was as fatal to the peace of the Church as to the prosperity of the empire. Their domestic tumults wasted the strength and destroyed the resources of the Greeks; they had neither courage nor ability to resist the spreading inundation of their Mahomedan foes without, and as little inclination to cultivate the interests of religion, or of letters within. The contests for the patriarchate banished all Christian charity and piety; and though the field of polemics called some ingenious disputants into the battle, the Church, and science itself rather lost than gained by their disputes and animosities. Psellus stands

eminent in the ranks, as a logician and philosopher: but the palm of praise in the study, as in the field, was carried off beyond all competition, by the Mahomedans, in whose schools medicine, mathematics, and every branch of science flourished most abundantly. All learning among Christians was chiefly confined to the monasteries, where a few of a literary turn amused themselves with the pursuits of knowledge, which rendered their solitude and indolence more supportable, without sharing in the vices of their brethren.

The Normans from pagan become Christian, and from barbarians, addicted to letters, carried with them into England, Italy and Sicily, a relish for the pursuits which they promoted, and introduced through the medium of their countrymen, a beam of light into these regions of the shadow of death. Schools were erected superior to the monastic and cathedral ones, where little was taught worth learning; and masters who had studied under the Arabic doctors of Spain, instructed their pupils with success in the most useful sciences. Physic was especially cultivated at Salernum in the kingdom of the Normans; and astronomy with the mathematics made a considerable progress; which would have been still greater, if the folly of the times had not turned the minds of many to the vain pursuits of astrology, and, instead of a diligent observance

observance of the heavenly luminaries, and their revolutions, attempted from the motions and conjunctions of the planets to read the fate of empires and of individuals.

The favourite study of the Western Church was logic and Aristotle. The disputes generated between the *nominalists* and *realists*, however important at the time, to us appear absurd and contemptible : and as far as the Church is concerned, are nothing worth. Yet these exercised the acuteness, and occupied the attention of many of the greatest scholars of the day.

The eminent prelate Anselm, of Canterbury, shone conspicuous in various treatises on metaphysics and natural religion ; discussed the nature of God, his attributes and mode of existence ; and extended his researches to the divine prescience and human liberty. But all the superstitions of former ages continued unsuppressed ; the same rage and reverence prevailed for relics as ever, yea increasing ; as if they supplied the place of every thing holy and heavenly. And all these learned men and great prelates were the first to stamp importance, and value on these wretched fragments of corpses and rags of old linen.

The

The pride and ambition of the superior ecclesiastics, even where their outward conduct was not branded with the prevailing vices, marked strongly Anselm and his fellows; but the general behaviour of the clergy was scandalous in the extreme. The western bishops being advanced to be counts and dukes and barons, and enriched with the liberal donations of the faithful, fought under their own banners; in the camp, commanded their liegemen, knights and warriors; at the courts of princes appeared with a magnificence and train of followers, which eclipsed all the nobility; and at their own palaces lived so superbly amidst a croud of domestics, clergy and laity, as if their kingdom was wholly of this world. Encouraged by such ghostly examples, the inferior orders put in for their share of luxury and indulgence, and with their patrons lived a life of sporting, pleasure, and sensual gratifications: sufficiently safe in the weekly mass, or the repetition of the rosary. A laborious preacher of God's word, a self-denied follower of the crucified Master was scarcely to be found: vice and ignorance had nearly exterminated every remains of vital godliness—Like priest like people.

CHAP. III.

GOVERNMENT, HERESIES, DISPUTES, RÎTES AND CEREMONIES.

THE Roman Pontiffs were now nearly arrived at the long wished for object of universal dominion ; at least in the western world : none dared to peep or mutter against their decrees. To them appeals were made ; they presided in all councils by their legates ; and claimed the right of deciding all religious controversy by their infallible dictates. Princes indeed often, when able, endeavoured to limit their pretensions, and bishops murmured, and submitted, where the danger of resistance was so great. Their claims were become boundless, they asserted a right to confer all ecclesiastical honours and emoluments, as originally derived from them by divine authority ; they assumed the disposition of kingdoms, and the bestowal of titles upon the monarchs ; their decisions were sought in all disputed rights. They absolved subjects from their allegiance ; and set up kings and emperors as best suited their own ambitious designs. Many of the greatest monarchs contributed to these exorbitant pretensions, by applying to the holy see to sanction the purposes of their ambition, or to vindicate their quarrels.

quarrels. Yet when seated on the thrones which they had usurped, they maintained with a vigorous hand the regalities of their kingdoms, against the impudent and exorbitant claims of these vicars of Christ. A long and rapid succession to the papal see would lead me too far to particularize: suffice it to say, that of some decent, some profligate, and all united in equal purposes of ambitious aggrandisement, not an appearance of real piety and genuine Christianity is to be found from first to last. The Emperors when strong interfered; by their authority raised to the pontificate and degraded from it; and when weak or pusillanimous, stooped to the most humiliating abasement.

To exclude the nobility and people of Rome from the right of suffrage in electing to the holy see, with whom hitherto that privilege had vested, in conjunction with the cardinals or chief
AN. 1058. clergy of Rome, Nicholas II. confined it wholly to the latter. The institution itself, and the persons entitled to this honour, have afforded much matter of dispute: suffice it to say, that the *cardinal bishops* were the seven provincial bishops of the Roman territory, the *cardinal clerks*, the twenty-eight principal parish presbyters. The *cardinal deacons* were afterwards added, to remove the murmurs of the most popular of the clergy, who felt themselves injured by their exclusion. The
clergy

clergy being gained by preferment, or the hope of preferment, the people tamely submit-
AN. 1073. ted. Yet in the election of that fiend

Hildebrand, no regard was paid to the established order, and he was raised to the see by general suffrage, and confirmed in it by the Emperor, against whom he presently raised a tempest, which shook the pillars of his throne. Unrestrained by any dictates of truth and justice, and presuming upon the distractions of the time, he had the audacity to attempt, and in many instances to succeed in rendering not only the Church absolutely subjected to him, but to extend his empire over princes and monarchs, as feudatories of the Roman see, deriving their power from it, and holding their kingdoms under the pontifical chair. A design so vast, required more than the powers of Rome papal to realize; and however in an hour of weakness some bowed to this audacious prelate's feet, others more resolute and possessing ability to dispute these impudent pretensions, maintained their independence, and refused to subjugate their crowns to such insolent claims. Britain and Gaul distinguished themselves in this contest, and maintained their rights, in part at least, against the usurpations of Rome. The letters of Hildebrand or Gregory, yet extant, are monuments of the most daring attempts to subjugate to his yoke, and levy a tribute
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from the dominions of all the princes of Christendom. Fear or favour induced many of them to submit, whilst others resisted the claim of St. Peter's representative. Thus from a thousand channels, the wealth of the nations flowed into the Roman treasury. The most resolute, however refractory, submitted to so many pretensions and abuses, that not a kingdom of the western world but contributed to support the ambition, and to encrease the immensity of the treasures of the Roman prelate. The arrogance of his pride, as well as the rapaciousness of his avarice, all the records of the times, and his numerous epistles abundantly testify. He not only ever after emancipated the election of the Popes from the Emperor's ratification, but extended his claims over the Emperors themselves.

AN. 1077. But a more solid and substantial acquisition he also secured by an intrigue with the rich heiress of the Duke of Tuscany, Matilda, who left the Roman see the whole of her vast and valuable possessions: and though the Emperor and other princes demurred to the testament, and prevented its entire execution, yet the Roman Pontiff secured a considerable share, and continued to claim the whole; little careful of the mode of the acquisition, if by any means he could aggrandize the see, the great object of his ambition.

Yet

Yet though himself emancipated from restraint, and free to gratify all his other passions, as well as his lust of dominion, no man was more severe on the poor priests, who preferred the married to the single state, or, as was more common in that day, indulged in concubinage; nor was he
AN. 1074. less violent against the simoniacal disposal of ecclesiastical benefices, as common a crime, and shamefully extending even to bishoprics; but he found no small difficulty to carry his edicts into execution: and though armed with all the power of church and state, many chose to incur the papal fulminations, and quit their benefices rather than their wives and children. And as good thus often comes out of human evil, some of them separated from the Romish communion, and joined the little band in the valleys of Piedmont, who wished to maintain a purer worship, and to escape from ecclesiastical tyranny. The rest, after many a tumult, were obliged to submit; and if they were not more continent, were at least obliged to be more secret in their amours.

But the subject of simony met with greater opposition still, as those most chargable with it, were in high places. The Emperor, HENRY IV. and his princes and bishops would not allow Gregory's legates to hold a council in Germany to confirm his edicts; and he was compelled to summons one at Rome,

Rome, where his will was law; and he avenged himself by anathemas, not only hurled
AN. 1075. against simoniacal contracts, but against every man who should receive investiture of bishopric or abbey, from the hands of a layman, or who presumed to confer it. And this thunder of excommunication was not more designed to check simoniacal contracts too common, than to obtain for the Church of Rome universally, the right claimed of conferring these beneficial preferments; and excluding the Emperor and Princes who had hitherto considered them as their royal prerogatives: however he dared not openly challenge so extensive a claim, but fixed his objection to *the manner* of the investiture, by the bishop's ring and crozier, which he regarded as a high profanation, to be transmitted through the hands of a layman, as if Emperors and Princes by so doing exercised a spiritual authority, and conferred by these badges of the pastoral office, and of union with the Church, as their spouse, some exercise of ghostly authority, appurtenant only to the visible Head and Master of the Church. The contests of ambition produced fearful and fatal consequences in the empire. The Emperor resolutely maintained his privileges, and the issue of the conflict had been little dubious, had not the intriguing pontiff gained a number of the Germanic Princes, Henry's avowed enemies, and fomenting the rebellion of the electors

electors against their head, insolently summoned the Emperor to answer the criminal charges laid against him, before himself at Rome. The rage of the insulted monarch knew no bounds; he convoked a council at Worms; accused and condemned the flagitious Gregory, and deposed
AN. 1076. him from his sacred office. Mad with fury, the Roman pontiff levelled at Henry's head all the thunders of the Church; cast him out as excommunicate; degraded him from his throne; and, blasphemously assuming divine prerogatives, absolved his subjects from their oath of allegiance.

Little indeed to be apprehended were these terrors, if the revolt of the German Princes had not collected a force, which Henry felt himself unable to resist. Threatened with the election of another Emperor, he meanly hastened to throw himself at the feet of the Pope, and avert by his submission the consequences which he now dreaded. Gregory was amusing himself at Canusium, with
AN. 1077. his endeared Matilda. It was the depth of winter, and three days the suppliant Emperor was kept with bare feet, and head uncovered, girt with sack-cloth around his shivering limbs, whilst the holy father and his mistress enjoyed the triumph of his humiliation. Scarcely admitted to the insolent pontiff's presence, he received
VOL. II. N absolution

absolution only on the hard condition of suspension from all regal honours, till an approaching congress should decide his fate. But this humiliation was of very short continuance; stung with the reproaches of his Italian vassals, the Emperor resumed the symbols of royalty, and resolved to abide the contest, whilst his enemies elected Rodolph of Swabia, to the throne, which they had declared vacant.

Battle upon battle, gave alternately the ascendant to the combatants, till the death of Rodolph raised Henry to a decided superiority, and marching to Rome in spite of the opposition from the troops of Matilda and the Normans, he placed a Pope of his own election in the chair, Clement III. Hardly rescued from the death of ignominy which he had deserved, by the courage of
AN. 1084. Guiscard, Gregory escaped the fate which awaited him, and died at Salernum; leaving the fruitful seeds of future wars and bloodshed to gratify the lust and ambition of God's vicegerents upon earth. Yet the horribility of such conduct, prevented not the beatification of this turbulent pontiff.

A schism now took place in the papal chair; each of the contending parties elected his several Pope, and as they deceased, for a long while filled up the vacancy.

vacancy. New anathemas, and scenes of slaughter, treachery and devastation followed to the end of the century. Thus for a trifling ceremony was the Christian world in the West, wasted with desolation and deluged with blood, to gratify the insolence and ambition of one great wicked priest.

The monks, encouraged by papal protection, and now especially induced by this Gregory to lift under the banners of Rome, endeavoured to withdraw themselves wholly from all other jurisdiction to become the liegemen of the Roman see. Immunity from all other prelates or princes' visitation, was eagerly coveted by the monks, and willingly granted by this assuming pontiff; who thus strengthened his force by these legions of auxiliaries: and they in turn now only dependent on Rome, indulged with more unbridled restraint, the gratification of every appetite and passion, which luxury engendered, which wealth supported, and which impunity from all consequences encouraged. Yet astonishing to tell, from these seminaries of vice, most of the ecclesiastical dignitaries were taken, and such was the ignorance and superstition of the age, that peculiar sanctity was supposed to be attached to the monkish orders; and kings, nobles, and merchants, to expiate former crimes, or ensure at the end of their lives a short and sure passage to heaven, either compromised by large legacies, or

entered into the fraternity, that they might enjoy the plenitude of merit annexed to the sacred profession !

Monkery being now so highly venerated, a new field for ambition opened. The fraternity of Clugni being in the eyes of the vulgar supposed to live in the greatest odour of sanctity, their abbot extended amazingly his reforms and jurisdiction; though the peculiar strictness and austerities which they affected, soon degenerated with their increasing wealth to the common standard of corruption.

AN. 1023. Reforms attempted among the Benedictines, the great prevailing order, divided the body; each vying with the other, the Camaldulite hermits arose in the Apennines, the Cistercians in France: and affecting the most rigid rules attracted the reverence of that superstitious age; the folly of which could not be more strongly marked than in the endowment of 1800 monasteries of the Cistercian order, who all set off with the most mortified pretensions, and as wealth and abundance flowed in upon them, ended exactly in the same point of dissolution of manners.

The orders of Grandmontains and Carthusians, still endeavoured to exceed in severity of discipline,
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and in absolute silence, poverty and obedience, all others of their brethren ; and by vows as unnatural, as unscriptural, to affect a superiority of perfection above their fellows. The pride and folly of these men, who once made a great noise in the world, are now become the object of ridicule, and after too long a reign of ignorance, the final extinction of these unchristian societies seems approaching.

The canons and canoneſſes, and their rules and regulations, hardly deſerve mention, unleſs to prove their not degenerating from the ghottly examples of their brethren.

What the ſtate of religion muſt be amidſt ſuch multiplied abuſes, from the head at Rome to the loweſt of the tonsured tribe, may eaſily be collected. The people ignorant, ſuperſtitious, devout, and profligate, yielded implicit faith and obedience to their clerical ſuperiors, who furniſhing them with abſolution and paſſports to St. Peter, thought themſelves juſtly entitled to the plunder which they extorted. The endleſs rites and ceremonies, and the pageantry attending them, kept up a conſtant pagan raree-ſhow, which amused that imbecil age, and diverted them from attending to the frauds and ſcandals of the clergy. The reverence for ſaints and relics roſe to the altitude of deity :

an oath upon a bone, a finger, or a nail of the cross, was supposed to be much more solemn and binding than any simple appeal to God, as the searcher of hearts. Indeed, the scriptures of truth, and the nature of moral obligation in this age, found but miserable expositors: whilst all the subtleties of Aristotle, and the scholastic divinity built upon them, bestowed upon the possessors of these nonsensical attainments, the dignity of Christian philosophers; and the famous Lanfranc, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and singularly eminent in this line, undertook, ridiculously enough, to defend *transubstantiation* on philosophical principles.

The mystic divinity was little less absurd than the scholastic; and bewildering the mind in reverie and abstractedness of contemplation, led off the Christian from the simplicity of revealed truth, to an inward light and an ideal spirituality of devotion.

Anselm, who, notwithstanding his prelatical pride, appears one of the best characters in that line, has left some devotional tracts not contemptible, and a treatise against infidels, marked with depth of thought and singular acuteness: but the reality of religion was so lost in form and superstitious

tious practices, that those who figure the highest, afford sorry specimens of divine truth. The alloy utterly debases the gold.

The heresies, that in former ages engaged so much polemic controversy, in this were superseded by disputes that were equally violent, and equally absurd.

The first arose from the abominable ambition of the Roman pontiff, in endeavouring to seduce the patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem from the jurisdiction of Constantinople to his own. A war of words, and excommunication followed. Vain was the attempt of the Grecian Emperor, who wanted the Romish support against the Normans, to conciliate the parties. The Roman legates sent on this occasion, met so much opposition, that shaking off the dust of their feet, and puffing it with all possible violence and malignity of anathemas into the eyes of their enemies, they departed in a rage. The Constantinopolitan patriarch, equally embittered in spirit, returned the dust, and the excommunication, and had the Roman bull publicly burnt by the Emperor's order. As these doughty champions for Christianity, each at the head of empires, fought with nearly equal arms, it is ridiculous enough to record the heinous crimes retorted upon the Latin churches. That

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they used unleavened bread in the Eucharist—did not abstain from things strangled, and blood—that their monks eat lard, and permitted even flesh to their sick brethren—that bishops wore rings—and priests effeminately shaved their beards. These, with other like important charges, were disputed and debated with all the rancour of sacerdotal acrimony. The real ground however was lordly jurisdiction.

A more important dispute was stirred by the Bishop of Chalcedon. The poor Alexis, Emperor of the East, was compelled by distress to melt down some silver platings of the church doors, and some images of saints of the like precious metal. This was not only sacrilege in the prelate's eye, but impiety against the *inherent sanctity* which dwelt in these venerable representatives. A solemn council was necessary to terminate the dispute.

AN. 1004. But the grand contest which made the chief noise in the Christian world, respected the body of Christ in the Eucharist. Leutheric, Archbishop of Sens, had affirmed, that none but the faithful received the body of Christ in that ordinance: but so *shocking* a supposition was quickly hushed up by king Robert and the prelate's friends. He had better enjoy his bishopric and hold his tongue. This prudent counsel he followed. Berenger

renger, a man eminent for his learning and Christian purity, would not keep silence, but

AN. 1045. zealously maintained, that no change whatever passed on the symbols in the Eucharist, agreeable to the representation of the famed Scotus ; and that they were merely the signs of Christ's *absent* body. Leo IX. the

AN. 1050. Roman pontiff, kindled at the derogatory idea. Council upon council condemned Berenger and his doctrine, and consigned the book of Scotus to the flames. Henry of France seconded his Holiness, and threatened the most severe judgments against Berenger, now Archbishop of Angers ; confiscating his revenues until he recanted. But he was not a man to be easily intimidated ; and boldly maintained the truth against the Monarch, the Pope, and all their abettors. As Berenger was supported by numerous disciples, the politic Leo IX. suffered the contest to sleep for a while. At his death, his more imprudent successor, Victor II. sent his legate into France to renew the condemnation ; and, in repeated councils, the famous Hildebrand, afterwards Pope, vented all his bitterness, and not only repeated the censures of the Church, but compelled the poor archbishop of Angers, it is said, by terror, to abjure his opinions, and be reconciled to the Roman see.

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Whether this is true in all its latitude, is dubious. That he was borne down by clamour and authority is pretty clear, and stooped to some mortifying compliances to avert the thunder levelled at his head. Yet his conscience overcame his terrors, and he could not refrain from maintaining truths, of which he had the fullest conviction. This produced a fresh summons to Rome, where a new council assembled under Nicolas, overawed the solitary witness, and compelled him to subscribe what so venerable an assembly decided as the catholic faith : and this he was engaged to acknowledge by an oath, to give the greater solemnity to the confession. We cannot but lament human infirmity. Let no man rashly censure compliances made under the impulse of fear. He felt all his danger, and therefore submitted to acknowledge, *the real body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, to be eaten by the faithful, not in a sacramental sense, but in reality and truth, as other sensible objects are.* A sentiment so shocking and abhorrent to common sense, as well as so utterly opposite to his convictions, he renounced the moment he had escaped from the papal tyranny, and taken refuge in his own diocese. With shame and contrition he owned the hypocritical part he had been compelled to act, and zealously recommenced the defence of the doctrines of truth. As he was now removed from the papal grasp,

grasp, the crafty Alexander II. sought to seduce him, by cajoleries, to return to his former confession : but he rejected the idea with abhorrence, and with greater activity disseminated the doctrines of the gospel, and acquired a multitude of disciples.

Gregory the VIIth, the famous Hildebrand, by whose threats he had been first intimidated, now advanced to the papal see, wished to heal this bitter breach : and whether really convinced by Berenger's arguments or not, he certainly shewed him a kindness and favour, little consonant to the violence of his character. Unable to resist the torrent of Berenger's adversaries, he summoned him to Rome, and admitted him to draw up a new confession of faith, very different from what had been extorted by his predecessor Nicolas. This, though more ambiguous and equivocal, he accepted, revoking the decisions of the former Pope and council. The enemies of Berenger professed themselves far from satisfied, and at their instigation a third council was held, and a third confession extorted, AN. 1078. more explicit than the second, but still coming short of the first. With this Gregory declared himself content, and sent him back with every token of esteem and favour. But alas ! the troubled conscience of Berenger forbade him

him to rest, in the last, any more than in the former equivocation. He renewed the avowal of his real sentiments, and overwhelmed with abuse and virulence, to which he made no reply, he solemnly confessed his crime, retiring from the world to spend his remaining days in mortification and prayer, for pardon of the baseness of his conduct, crying out, "Fountain of mercy, be gracious, to a wretch acknowledging his great offence!"

Gregory evidently in this matter acted not from conviction, but from the knowledge of those with whom he had to do, and whom he dared not offend. There is a singular trait preserved, whether of his fanaticism, or hypocrisy, in a letter addressed to Berenger before the assembling of the last council. "I have no doubt," said he, "of the rectitude of your sentiments, respecting the sacrifice of Christ, according to the Scriptures; but it is my custom to have recourse to the Virgin Mary, concerning matters which are in agitation." In consequence of which application he informs him: "The blessed Virgin Mary hath heard and answered me, that I should think, and hold nothing respecting the sacrifice of Christ, but what the Scriptures expressly mention, against which Berenger hath advanced nothing contrary to truth. I wished to communicate this to you, that you might come to me with the most assured confidence"

“ dence and alacrity.” It is singular enough, that one Pope and council should condemn the decisions of the preceding ones ; then consult the Virgin Mary ; commend Berenger’s orthodoxy by an express revelation from her ; and afterwards, in compliance with the last council, extort another confession different both from the former Pope and council, and from the approbation of the blessed Virgin herself. But Popes, as well as others, must temporize when the current of enthusiasm runs strong against them.

The doctrine of Berenger expired not with him. His followers became multiplied ; and a new seed was sown, which vegetated to bring forth fruit unto God, and to preserve the holy truths of the gospel, that they should not utterly fail.

A sect, of which frequent mention has been made, began now to grow into observation in the West, and to attract persecution. The Paulicians, charged with Manichæan heresies, had been banished into Bulgaria by the Grecian Emperor. From thence some migrated into Italy, and others had spread through France and Germany. AN. 1050. many. Their solemn looks and exemplary behaviour engaged the respect of many. They bore a number of appellations, Patarini, Bulgares, Cathari, and *Bons Hommes*, or good

good men, for such they certainly appeared to be. Whether the opinions imputed to them be true or not, it is difficult to decide, when we consider the ignorance and superstition of the age, and the enmity borne to whatever deserved the name of Christian. Certain it is they were bitterly persecuted;

and early in this century, condemned
AN. 1017. as heretics at Orleans, and burned for their obstinacy. From the charges laid against them, it appears, that revolting against the worship of images, purgatory, penances, relics, and all the multitudinous abuses prevalent in the Church, they probably carried their objections to the opposite extreme, and thought slightly of all ordinances and ministers, supposed all distinctions useless among the faithful, and sacraments unnecessary; confining all their religion to spiritual worship and a holy conversation. Con-

AN. 1076. demned afterwards, at a council held at Albi, they gained the name of Albigenses, a term frequently given to all reputed heretics. As their enemies never produced a charge to impeach their genuine piety, and their patient and resolute sufferings speak forcibly in their favour, it is a strong presumptive evidence, that whatever errors they may have been really chargeable with, and to whatever blameable excess they might have carried some of their opinions, the root of the matter was in them; and their unpardonable

able crimes were their rejecting the tyranny and fraud of a corrupt priesthood, whom they thus rendered inveterate against them, and from whom they could expect no mercy. All power being now monopolized by these partial judges in their own cause, and the secular arm ready to execute their sentences, a poor Paulician could as little hope for an impartial hearing at their bar, as to escape from their judgment.

AN. 1092. The famed Roscelinus, a chief of the dialectic sect called *Realists*, was accused of atheism, because he maintained that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, were not to be placed in the rank of *names* or *denominations*, but of *things* or *realities*. After tedious disputations on a subject so abstruse, and above the ken of human intellect, he was condemned at Soissons, and, driven from place to place, died in Aquitain.

AN. 1023. A more absurd contention, raised and maintained by the monks of Limoges, whether their first pretended Bishop Martial, was an apostle, and one of Christ's seventy disciples; after long and fierce disputes, at last was by the Roman Pontiff decided in their favour. That absurdities so glaring, and on subjects so trivial, should for years together engage the attention of popes and councils, is a degrading monument of the imbecillity of the age.

Forms and ceremonies multiplied abundantly, and were made of the most solemn importance. The overbearing Gregory VII, among his other pretensions, required all worship to conform to the model of Rome. The Spanish ritual, from the beginning, had corresponded with the Gothic formula, and the Spaniards were reluctant to quit their ancient usage. The imperious pontiff enforced the abolition. It was referred to single combat; the Gothic champion prevailed; a second ordeal by fire was referred to; the Gothic ritual passed, it is affirmed, the flames unhurt. But Gregory persevered. The Queen Constantia favoured the Pope, and King Antonio consented to adopt the Roman ritual, in opposition to the wishes of the people; and what was then generally supposed, the dictates of heaven—such dominion had the papal see assumed over the consciences of men. But a still more glaring abuse followed, in compelling all the western nations to use the Latin tongue in the public service of the Church, though it was now a language no where spoken, nor commonly understood. And thus a new source of ignorance among the people was introduced; and their prayers, which had long been mere form, were now absolutely without any meaning, and unintelligible.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE CHURCH.

MATTERS were verging now to the utmost extremity. But God was providing for a revival of his own work ; and by few, and feeble means, to preserve a chosen generation, that the earth might not become as Sodoma, and be made like unto Gomorra.

I remark the same spirit among the Nestorians, of what appears real zeal. Some hidden ones remained in the valleys of the Alps. England still afforded sparks of light. A few had not wholly abandoned truth and godliness. The good presbyters, who refused to part with their wives and families, and chose rather to be cast out, offered a conscientious and resolute stand against unchristian usurpations ; and Berengarius, the Archbishop of Angers, and others besides them, held many of the essential truths of God, though often compelled to conceal their sentiments, by the dreadful persecutions to which they knew they must subject themselves ; hoping probably, however mistaken, that they could do more good secretly, than by raising

a violent clamour against themselves and their doctrines. The example of Berenger would tend to deter the more eminent in learning and clerical advancement, who might think with him. But I apprehend the number of such was truly inconsiderable, and that the great body of his disciples, and of those who still retained the true doctrine, was to be found in the inferior stations of the Church, and among the unlettered of the laity: in whose hearts the Spirit of God continued to give the understanding, which is after godliness, and who received the Scriptures in simplicity and truth.

The warmth with which the disputes were managed, naturally awakened general enquiry; and however the multitude were swayed by authority, and enslaved with priest-craft, some, many, no doubt, considered the subjects with attention, and formed their conclusions according to common sense, and the Scriptures. Whilst Augustin, Godeschalcus, and others were read, some beams of gospel-truth could not fail to dart through the prevailing gloom, and help a few at least to find their way to heaven and glory, through the one mediator Jesus Christ.

I cannot but conclude, that the persecuted Paulicians were, at least many of them, faithful servants of
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our Lord. I am always loth to receive the accusations of interested adversaries, especially where the gospel of Christ is the subject. Whatever mistakes these men might have been chargeable with at first, often, as with other sects, the dross has been purged away, and the purity of truth been preserved. With their enemies and persecutors, there was evidently nothing but ignorance, insolence, formality, superstition, and cruelty.

The disciples of Methodius and Cyril, still continued to transmit their purer tenets to their disciples, who continued in Bohemia and Moravia; and kept alive a seed counted to the Lord for a generation: and though scarcely vegetating, were preserved in a succeeding generation to bring forth plenteous fruits of righteousness.

CENTURY XII.

CHAP. I.

STATE OF THE CHURCH WITHOUT.

THE western warriors had erected the banners of the Cross on the towers of Jerusalem, and spread their trophies on the walls of Antioch and Edeffa, when the Mahometans recovering from the consternation into which repeated defeats had thrown them, rallied their forces; and though they met an obstinate resistance, they returned to the charge, straitening the Christians in Syria and Palestine, and after the conquest of Edeffa, threatened Antioch and Jerusalem itself. The cries of the afflicted reached the Roman see, and Europe heard the groans of their brethren with anguish, and resentment of their wrongs. They trembled for the fate of the holy sepulchre, and all the precious relics still buried in Palestine. The Roman pontiffs founded the alarm, and princes, clergy and people assembled to debate the propriety of the measures which they proposed, and to contrive the means of their execution. The danger, the distance, the ill-success of the former attempts, the dear-bought experience of Saracen valour, and the inability of
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any single kingdom to provide a sufficient force for such an enterprise; the jealousy of the monarchs of each other; the difficulty to collect the various nations under one leader; these all seemed to present an insurmountable barrier to a second crusade. The dreadful effects of the former had not yet ceased to be felt and lamented. The Pope's propositions and exhortations were therefore heard with caution, and canvassed without enthusiasm. It required some flaming spirit to infuse new life into the dying cause of crusades; and such was found in the famous Bernard, Abbot of Clairval. Darting like lightning from his convent, his ardor and eloquence kindled the latent spark of zeal into a flame through France and Germany; where this itinerant apostle of the cross travelled, every where surrounded by thousands. His confident assurances of success from Heaven, promised to him, were heard and believed, not only by the credulous multitude, but by Lewis of France, his Queen and nobles assembled, who crossed themselves immediately for the conflict. The Emperor, AN. 1146. Conrad, for a while demurred, but, vanquished by the powerful arguments, and heaven-bearing commission of Bernard, associated himself in the enterprise, to reap laurels and victory, which must attend their standard, as God's inspired prophet had assured them. But alas! the event corresponded not with the prediction. The

monarchs with their armies proceeded by different routs for the place of their destination; and after the most perilous and tedious travels by land and sea, brought only the shattered fragments of their numerous hosts to witness the Christian disgrace: betrayed by friends; destroyed by enemies; the spirit of discord alike prevailed in the crusading armies, as among the leaders in Palestine. Tired of the fruitless and unhappy expedition, they hardly set their foot on the Holy Land, ere they prepared to return to Europe, and not a tenth of their numerous warriors saw their native land again. The prophecies of Bernard proved as false as fatal. AN. 1153.

The famous Saladin taking occasion of the weakness of the Christian cause, still rendered more desperate, by the profligacy of their manners, and their mutual disputes, jealousies, and ambition, fell upon Judea, took the King of Jerusalem, Lusignan, prisoner in battle, and besieged and carried the city with considerable resistance. The desolation was dreadful; torrents of blood flowed; thousands and tens of thousands of miserable Christians were sold into captivity; their power was humbled to the dust, and their name almost extinguished in the East. AN. 1187.

The dreadful tidings reached Italy and the western world, like the stroke of the thunderbolt.

Astonishment,

Astonishment, anguish, and despair overwhelmed the Christian nations; roused by the dreadfulness of the catastrophe, the mightiest monarchs of Europe started from their thrones, seized their armour, and prepared themselves for the perilous conflict, resolved to conquer or perish beneath the walls of Jerusalem. But the enterprise corresponded not with their ardour, and the greatness of their preparations. The first auspicious campaign of the Emperor Frederic, was quickly followed by his death, caught by bathing in the cold waters of the Cydnus. Disease more fatal than the sword of the Mahomedans, thinned the ranks of his warriors; unequal to any great enterprise, the rest disbanded, and few returned to tell the dismal tale of their sufferings and disappointment. AN. 1190.

AN. 1191. The King of France, Philip Augustus, and the lion-hearted Richard of England, each pressed into the service, and followed the adventurous Frederic. They endeavoured to shorten the voyage, and to lessen the danger of a long march, by an embarkation from Italy; and arriving safe at the head of their several armies, the Saracenic hosts trembled before them, and the first successful contests promised them conquests and victory: but the French monarch weakened the cause by his desertion, and returned; and all the heroic arts of Richard after this defection, were only sufficient to

erect a trophy to his valour, without procuring any solid advantages for his brethren. Tired with the bloody and unavailing conflict on both sides, a short truce afforded a breathing time of AN. 1192. three years, three months and three days.

Saladin continued in possession of what he had conquered, and the Christians of the poor remains of their former possessions : whilst the noble Richard returning to his own land to prepare for greater exploits, experienced at the hands of a Roman Emperor of Germany, baseness, and cruelty, which an infidel Saladin would have disdained ; and lingered long under an inglorious captivity, till all hopes in the East were thus totally extinguished.

The miseries, which these expeditions occasioned in the Christian world, are incalculable : England, France, Germany, were exhausted of men and money : all the countries through which the armies passed, suffered grievously ; and those to whose succour they had hastened, were now left to desolation and destruction.

During these dreadful and unprofitable contests, were instituted the three famous military orders, which, after flourishing with such eminent dignity and wealth, are now nearly extinct, and reduced to the little isle of Malta and its knights ; the history of which hardly enters into my province.

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The attempts of the Christian monarchs of the West on Palestine, naturally awakened the enmity of the Mahomedans, and brought the severest sufferings on those who yet professed Christianity under the Saracenic governments. They justly suspected in every Greek and Latin a traitor ; and probably often discovered their intrigues with their crusading brethren. The crusaders themselves also by their brutality to their enemies provoked retaliation, and the sacrifices though terrible were just. Thus almost all the eastern churches fell to the dust, and were buried in ruins either by the ravages of their Christian brethren, or by the fire of their Mahomedan foes.

AN. 1165. An event as inauspicious to the Christian name, produced in the north-east of Asia a catastrophe as grievous. The success of the Nestorian Christians had been raised to the highest pitch by a Tartar chieftain, who had embraced the faith, and is supposed to have been ordained a presbyter ; whence he is usually known by the name of PRESTER JOHN. He had seized a favourable moment, and extended greatly his dominions : and his fame had reached the Greek and Roman Emperors, to whom he had notified his faith and exploits. His successor continued under the same title, the protector of his Christian subjects. But the
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great conqueror of Asia, Genghis-cawn, AN. 1187. overturned his throne, and overran his country; carrying destruction through China, India, Persia and Arabia, overwhelming alike Christians and Mahomedans with the same deluge of his Tartar horde; and establishing a new empire in the conquered provinces; in all which the Christian faith was greatly weakened by the ravages of the conquerors. Nor had the northern regions of Europe ceased to afford calamitous instances of pagan cruelties, where their power prevailed, or their revolts led them to vent their rage on the missionaries and their flocks.

AN. 1126. Such afflictive events were little compensated by any new acquisitions to the Christian faith; for these were indeed of so suspicious a nature as hardly to be reckoned in the scale. Among these are numbered the conversions wrought by the zealous Boleslaus of Poland, who granted peace to the vanquished Pomeranians, on condition of embracing the gospel, and receiving the missionaries he sent; of whom the most eminent and successful was Albert, Bishop of Bamberg. For in those days, there were not wanting bishops themselves, who were emulous of this honour.

AN. 1168. Waldemar, the King of Denmark, displayed the like zeal among the pagan tribes on
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the Baltic, against whom he led his victorious armies. Every where he destroyed all monuments of idolatry, and by the terror of his chastisements, as much as by the zeal of the Archbishop of Lunden and his associates, compelled them to submit to the Christian faith and worship.

AN. 1151. The Finlanders received their profession nearly by the same means. The sword of Eric, King of Sweden, and the zealous archbishop of Upsal, who accompanied him in the expedition, bent their reluctant necks to the Christian yoke; under which impatient, and not yet tamed to submit to every prelatical imposition, an angry chieftain avenged a penance imposed by the too rigid missionary prelate in his murder, conferring on him thereby the honours of martyrdom.

AN. 1198. The Esthonians and Livonians were converted by the same effectual means. Mainard, a canon of St. Augustin, having penetrated the country with some merchants, attempted in vain the conversion of the natives. Mortified at the little attention paid to him, a new commission with the episcopat was conferred on him by Pope Urban III. and the zealous missionary bishop immediately levied an apostolic army to accomplish by the sword, what he could not do by persuasion; and baptising at the point of the spear wrought wonders. His successors

successors nobly followed so edifying an example, till a new military order of *knights sword bearers*, instituted by Pope Innocent the III^d, for that express purpose, completed their conversion, and left scarce a pagan unbaptised. In return for which inestimable blessing, the bishops and clergy, with the knights, only seized every thing valuable into their own possession, and took the government, body and soul, of their greatly obliged, certainly greatly humbled converts.

AN. 1124—1154. The Slavonians still numerous and very abhorrent of Christianity, called forth the military zeal of Henry, Duke of Saxony, and the missionary labours of Vicelinus, consecrated Bishop of Oldenberg. He is said to be a man of most eminent excellence, and to have wrought wonderful conversions among them. I can only observe, that all these missionaries seem to have bishoprics in view, and princes with their power at their elbow; circumstances, which render the truth of their piety, and their Christian labours and real success considerably suspicious.

Such acquisitions as these could hardly be called additions to the Christian pale. The converts changed their idols only for saints, and Friga for the Virgin; and they worshipped them nearly with the same ceremonies. Of the doctrines of revelation, they

they continued as ignorant, as their lives were the reverse of the practice it enjoined ; and herein their apostles themselves too frequently kept them company : but they were all taught the sign of the cross ; to make the proper genuflexions and salutations ; were brought to pay tithes and oblations to the clergy ; and to profess obedience to the see of Rome, the first article of the catholic creed of those days, and more essential than all the rest ; and so far by the military power, which accompanied them, and the lying miracles with which they imposed on these illiterate barbarians, they at last effectually prevailed. All bowed the knee to the Roman pontiff and his booted apostles.

The Saracens in Spain maintained their empire, and their love of science, whilst their neighbours were exhausting themselves in distant expeditions, and leaving behind them the most beautiful countries of Europe under the Mahomedan yoke.

CHAP. II.

THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

THOUGH ignorance profound generally prevailed, there were in the East and West, men of genius and letters, who still figured among the learned. The Greeks ever superior to the Latins, produced writers of some eminence; and the patriarchs of Constantinople cultivated science, especially the Aristotelian philosophy, among their clergy, that they might be better able to dispute against their adversaries. But it must be acknowledged, that the famed Bishop Eustathius's comment upon Homer, far exceeds any similar comment on the Scriptures in that day.

The western world attempted some revival of literature, and from the famous Saracenic schools, to which from England, as well as all parts of Europe, the desire of information brought a multitude of students, a number of doctors issued forth to enlighten their countrymen with the sciences; and academies were opened for teaching them in the principal cities. Among these the university of Paris was particularly famous, and surpassed the
elder

elder establishment at Oxford, which Alfred is said to have founded, and which continued also to prosper greatly. Montpelier, Bologna, Salernum, were severally renowned for law, physic, and philosophy, and vied with each other in celebrity. The seven liberal sciences divided into the trivium, or three initiatory ones, grammar, rhetoric and logic, and the quadrivium, arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy, were now comprised under the name of philosophy; and theology, jurisprudence and physic, were added to the circle: the latter were particularly taught in some schools, according to the learned profession which each student was designed to pursue.

AN. 1137. The Arabians were the great masters of physic. From their universities the first elements of the science were derived; and the writings of their physicians particularly read. What gave a peculiar brilliancy to the study of jurisprudence was a casual discovery made at Amalfi, in Italy, of the long lost pandect of the Emperor Justinian, containing all the Roman laws, which the inundations of barbarians had for ages buried in dust and oblivion, and supplanted by their several barbarous customs, and oral traditions; a diversity which rendered the administration of civil and criminal justice so very different in the various countries of Christendom. But no sooner had this ancient code appeared,

appeared, than it was studied with avidity, and almost universally adopted as the rule of administration of justice. England being nearly singular in rejecting it, and adhering to her own common law and ancient customs.

AN. 1130—1140. The Roman pontiffs, eager to seize every occasion of confirming and enlarging their jurisdiction, immediately formed the scheme of modelling their ecclesiastical regimen on the plan of the admired pandect; and Gratian, a monk, under the patronage of Eugenius, produced that arrangement called *the decretals*, being a collection of pontifical edicts and canons, which mightily contributed to subject the world to the popish canon law, as to the Roman civil law; the study of both which was united, and tending greatly to enrich its professors and exalt the dominion of Rome over the Christian world, became a great favourite with the Pope and his partisans; it continues to this day, in a measure, in protestant as well as popish countries: and many of its absurd, debasing and tyrannical canons have been made the engines of oppression, and pointed against those who have risen up to witness against the abuses of popish and prelatical tyranny.

But though a revival was attempted in the republic of letters, and many set themselves with zeal
to

to excel, we shall be sadly disappointed if we expect to meet with either experimental philosophy, or sound divinity. The method of tuition in the schools was still strangely absurd; and the matters which exercised the subtleties of disputation, and afforded fame to the combatants, were ridiculous and trifling beyond measure. Such we may reckon the great contests between the *realists* and *nominalists*; the subtle questions of scholastic theology, insignificant in their nature, and exciting an acrimony in their disputes, as disgraceful as the subjects disputed were contemptible. It would lead me too far to enter into the jargon of the schools; I shall content myself with just producing the greatest and most admired theologian of the age, whose writings were abundantly more studied than the Scriptures, and held in higher admiration.

AN. 1164. PETER LOMBARD, so called from his country, produced a famous body of divinity, which gained him the eminent title of *master of the sentences*. So high was his reputation, that the greatest men of that day used his treatises as the text book of theological lectures, and wrote long and profound comments on the admired prelate's performances. Lombard professed to comprize the whole circle of theology in four books. The first, of God and his mode of subsistence—the second, of angels and men, their creation and fall; original and ac-

tual sin ; grace, and predestination—the third, of the incarnation of Christ, the gifts and graces of his spirit, and christian morals—the fourth, the nature of the sacraments, and the four last things. These all consisted of compilations from the fathers ; and as *their* contradictions were endless, and their sentiments in many of these things diametrically opposite, the learned theologist laboured to reconcile them, and to form one uniform mass of catholic doctrine from the jarring elements. Whoever opens the book and reads a single page, will find abundance to exercise his risible muscles, and make him stand astonished at the imbecillity of an age, that could admire and adopt such absurdities. The celebrated Bacon has left us a curious testimony of the veneration in which these works were held, and how much the apostles and prophets, and the Scriptures of inspiration were placed below the *master of the sentences*, and his divine works of theology. It is an address to Clement IV.

“ The batchelor,” says Bacon, “ who reads the
“ Scripture, gives place to the reader of *the sen-*
“ *tences*, who every where, and among all, is ho-
“ noured and preferred. The reader of the sen-
“ tences has his choice of the most eligible time,
“ and holds a cell and society with the religious :
“ but the biblical reader has neither ; and must
“ beg

“ beg for such an hour as the reader of the sentences is pleased to assign him. He who reads the Lombardine thesis, may any where dispute and be esteemed *a master* : he who reads the text of Scripture is admitted to no such honour. The absurdity of this conduct is evident : to place in so inferior a station the theological reader of the sacred text, beneath him who reads the master of the sentences.”

AN. 1142. Of all the men famous in that day, next to Lombard was Abelard. Deeply versed in all the Aristotelian subtleties, he introduced them alike into philosophy and divinity, and produced a method of theological teaching, into which every vain question and curious speculation was introduced, and disputed with all the pomp of wisdom, the profundity of investigation, the immensity of genius, and the acrimony of passion. To these subtle doctors, and their theological schools, the youth of Europe attached themselves ; heard with wonder the depths of their unintelligible science, and took a fierce interest in the decision of these unmeaning controversies.

There were indeed adversaries, who attempted greater simplicity, and affected higher spirituality. These were called *biblical divines* : as they confined themselves to the sacred oracles chiefly, and reject-

ed all the miserable farrago of the schools. Whilst the *mystics*, abandoning themselves to an imagined inward light and teaching, looked for immediate impulses, and depended upon what they called illuminations of the spirit. These, though borne down by the superior multitude of their more profound theological brethren, maintained a long and stout war of polemic disputation; and council upon council became necessary to maintain the peace of the Church against the violence of these opponents; and to bridle the licentious rage of disputing about intricate and dangerous theological opinions. Even Lombard fell under censure, and Abelard was condemned as an heretic. Though the scholastic divinity still maintained its ground, and flourished till the days of the Reformation.

In this war of words, truth and godliness suffered alike. To be an acute disputant was much more coveted than to be a humble Christian; and victory, won by the most intricate subtleties of sophisms, crowned the warrior in the schools far beyond all the acquirements of the simplicity which is in Christ. The wisdom from above, which is pure, peaceable, easy to be intreated, full of good fruits, without wrangling, and without hypocrisy, was in little request in that day. The most subtle in distinctions—the most violent in argument, and the most obstinate in perseverance, were esteemed the

the most elevated theologians. True religion was lost, not merely in endless forms and ceremonies of worship paid to saints and angels, multiplied without measure ; but in a labyrinth of intricate questions, and an ignorance of divine principles and practice, truly deplorable.

The manners of the clergy afforded the most encouraging ground of licentiousness to their flocks. Simony and concubinage, however sharply condemned, continued to prevail ; and we have only to read the works of the famous St. Bernard, to know how deeply the monastic orders, as well as pontiffs and bishops, were sunk in profligacy and in superstition. A stronger and more accurate expression cannot be formed, than the Scripture offers of the state of that miscalled Christian Church, “ the great whore which sitteth on the “ many waters.” It is afflictive to dwell on these scenes : we will deplore, and pass them by.

CHAP. III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, CONTESTS,
HERESIES, RITES AND CEREMONIES.

THE government of the Church, in one despotic head, was the darling object pursued by all the Roman pontiffs. But the Constantinopolitan patriarch still maintained his independence, if not his supremacy; and all the efforts of the Greek emperors, when their political interests compelled them to court the support of Rome, could not prevail over the clergy to submit to the Roman see. The attempts to reconcile the two great patriarchs only widened the breach. The Greeks fought hard for their own bishop, and would admit no pre-eminence or jurisdiction of the Latin prelate. In argument and learning the scale preponderated in favour of Constantinople; but power, wealth, and numbers were on the side of Rome. To this day the contest subsists.

One nearer at home, and more important still, called forth the activity and all the intrigues of the papal see. The subject of *investitures* was again contested with all the arms of heaven and earth. The
Pope

Pope having debauched an unnatural son to rebel against his gallant father, hoped, by dethroning his resolute foe, Henry the Fourth, and raising the parricide and rebel to the empire, that his gratitude would concede the important point in dispute. He was mistaken : and the impious absolution granted to him and his subjects from allegiance to his father, failed of transferring it to the see of Rome. When seated firm on the throne, Henry V. asserted his rights against the papal claims, as vigorously as his dethroned father had done. The disappointed and exasperated pontiff

renewed his decrees and anathemas ;

AN. 1110. and Henry having appeased the disturbances and wars at home, began his march to humble the proud prelate, as cringing in the hour of danger, as insolent in the moment of prosperity. The matter was attempted to be ac-

commodated, when a new tumult at

AN. 1111. Rome provoked the Emperor to seize and imprison the trembling pontiff ;

and there extort from him the fullest concessions to obtain his liberty. But the spirit of the man was unchanged ; the spirit of the Roman hierarchy unsubdued ; the clamours of his clergy were violent ; the agreement was disannulled ; and a new council called, in which the Pope lamented his fallibility and error, and again deprived the Emperor of the right of investitures. His excommu-

nication followed. This terrible sentence against the heretic who might rebel, and murder his father with impunity, shook the pillars of the throne which he had usurped. The princes of Germany revolted; his own people were ready to withdraw their allegiance. Just vengeance roused the spirit of the Emperor against his former patron, Pascal. The Pope fled on his approach, and endeavouring to engage his Norman auxiliaries to recover his royal seat of Rome, he finished his days amidst these military preparations. A schism in the popedom followed. Calixtus the Second, a man of temper, endeavoured, after sharp conflicts with the Antipope, to heal the breach; and by yielding to the Emperor the point of right and regality, but changing the mode of investiture to save the honour of the see, the peace of the Church was restored. AN. 1112.

AN. 1155—1177. But this peace was not long after disturbed by a fresh schism in the papacy. The contests of pride and ambition in the Church are a mortifying subject. At Rome we find nothing else. One breach is scarcely healed before a wider is opened. The dispute was revived by the Pope, Adrian II. with the Emperor Frederic I. and insolence prevailing, the Emperor, after years of contests with succeeding popes, was compelled to humble

humble himself to the proud pontiff, Alexander III. The same domineering prelate attempted to interfere in the English government ; disappointed with some statutes, enacted at AN. 1164. Clarendon, which brought the clergy under responsibility to the law. Becket, the archbishop, and partisan of the Roman see, after the most insufferable acts of insolence against the king, though treated with a condescension of which he was unworthy, continuing, during the king's absence in France, his prelatical arrogance against the established laws, suffered by the hands of assassins ; and though the king in no measure countenanced the deed, yet having in an irritated state expressed his indignation against that monster of ingratitude, he was charged with abetting his murder, and compelled to secure the peace of his kingdom by submitting to an humiliating penance. Whilst Becket, who deserved to be hanged as a traitor, was canonised among the first of English saints ; and his altar attended with more oblations than even the Virgin Mary, or Christ himself. AN. 1173.

AN. 1179. A third Lateran council confirmed and enlarged the papal jurisdiction. From Rome, indeed, what could flow but tyranny ? The mode of election to the tiara was unchangably fixed—heretics were to be proceeded against with fire and sword

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sword—and as the gainful trade of canonisation, and the sale of indulgences increased, these, with other greater causes, such as creating kingdoms, and conferring titles on their monarchs, were in future wholly to be confined to the papal see.

As nothing promised a more lucrative branch of trade than the sale of indulgences, these were peculiarly monopolised by the politic pontiffs. The bishops had supposed themselves possessed of the right of granting exemption from the penalties imposed by the Church on transgressors, and commuting the punishment for money to be applied to charitable uses. The popes, who claimed to be alone entitled to apply the keys to the Church's treasury of *works of supererogation*, proceeded one step farther, and assumed authority of exempting the offender, not only from all *ecclesiastic punishment*, but from *all suffering for sin in an eternal world*—a prerogative which gave infinitely greater value to the indulgence, which in that case could never be purchased too dearly.

From such corruption in the head, what could be expected in the members, but just what is recorded. . The grossest frauds, the profoundest ignorance, and dissolution of manners without a covering. The monkish orders attempted to be reformed by the Abbot of Clugni, maintained not
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the austerity of their rules, amidst the wealth and possessions heaped upon them. The Cistercians, their rivals for public estimation, supported by the great St. Bernard, and from him called Bernardines, rose high in repute for sanctity. Jealousy produced quarrels and mutual criminations, and a dispute about a grant of exemption from tythes was prosecuted with the sharpest animosity.

The canons, who now taught the public schools, rising in veneration and attracting liberal donations, awakened the envy and enmity of the monkish orders; and bitter disputes for pre-eminence marked the kind of Christianity for which they contended.

Where so much was to be got, the hot-bed of monachism produced a plenteous crop of new orders, of Fontevraud, Premontr , Carmelites, &c. one of which began with a single jack-ass, and in a very short space of time possessed a thousand abbeys, three hundred provostships, innumerable priories, and five hundred nunneries. But none for antiquity dared contest with the Carmelites; the disciples of the prophet Elijah, their patron and founder, and ever since his days inhabitants of Mount Carmel; affirming that from his bald head the clerical tonsure was derived. It required, indeed, an age of folly to swallow frauds so gross,
and

and pretensions so ridiculous. But from the trifling contentions of monks, for wealth and pre-eminence, we turn to greater among the Greeks, in which the Emperor himself entered the polemic lists, “Whether the incarnate God, was at once “offerer and oblation?” “What was the meaning “of the words of Christ, “My father is greater “than I?” in which the royal disputant employed the argumentum baculinum, against those doctors who presumed to differ from his opinion, by depriving them of their honours and benefices, and by denunciations of death.

The Latins had yet a wide field for controversy in the various sentiments held respecting the body of Christ in the Eucharist; which Rupert revived, with other disputed opinions, concerning the *effects of the divine will*. But a more important matter was long and hard fought by the several partisans, respecting “*the immaculate conception of the Virgin:*”

to which a festival had been consecrated AN. 1140. by the church of Lyons. St. Bernard disputed strongly the truth of the fact; but the current of superstition here ran against the saint, sufficiently credulous; and the Virgin Mary stood so high in the favour of the Christian populace, that every thing derogatory to her honour, was treated as the highest blasphemy. The conception immaculate, and the festival, with all its

its rites and ceremonies appurtenant, were therefore established with a high hand. The new forms of worship invented, and the multiplied additions to the old, exercised the brightest geniuses and the greatest characters of the age, each seeking for himself a name, in his superabundant devotion, and veneration for the saints and their relics, the holy images, and the virgin; with all the motley farrago of lights, crucifixes, vestments, incense, and genuflexions.

Respecting the heresies of this century, the ancient ones seem to have been forgotten, and others of a different kind awakened the enmity, and excited the persecution of the ecclesiastical powers. In the East, and in the West, the enormous wealth, insufferable pride, and evil examples of the priesthood revolted many: and the faithful witnesses against the abuses of the clergy, and the superstitious practices of the age, were sure to be loaded with every calumny. The accusations against these reformers, charged with multiplied heresies, and heightened by all the bitterness of malevolence, are always to be heard with caution and just suspicion. Lying for the honour of the Church, had long since been sanctioned by the authority of some of the fathers, as no evil, but rather meritorious. Indeed, in these days of ignorance and superstition, the
very

very opposition formed against the scandalous impositions of the ecclesiastics, would be apt to lead men into the opposite extremes, and to out-reform reformation. Hence, perhaps, some things truly blameable, were chargeable upon those, who, on the whole, were the excellent of the earth, and sincerely meant the honour of the Christian name.

Such were the Euchites, or *praying men*, in the East. Abhorrent of the formality and superstitions around them, they gave themselves up to prayer and contemplation. They seem to have been either a branch of the *mystics*, many of whom in silence and secret worshipped God; or more probably of the *Paulicians*, as they were charged, like them, with Manichean heresies: but their most revolting crime was their dislike of the priestly power and arrogance.

The *Bogomiles*, seem to be of the same race, as their name signifies, *criers for mercy*. Their leader was put to death, but his followers remained. Various heretical opinions and fanatic practices are imputed to them.

In the West, a multitude of sectaries arose, holding a mixture of truth and error: wishing a reformation of many things in the Church, and giving occasion

occasion to their adversaries to charge them with errors and practices, as blameable as those which they condemned.

The Cathari, or Puritans, said to be a branch of the Paulicians, excited the bitterness, abuse, and persecution of the abbot Bernard, Evervinus, and Egbert. They were widely diffused through the south of France, Piedmont, Flanders and Milan. Many things are laid to their charge by their bigot enemies, which they knew not; more are misrepresented: but from their own shewing, even by the testimony of their persecutors, in doctrine they were as sound, as in conduct exemplary. If, in emerging from darkness some mistakes mingled with the truths they held; if poor, and generally illiterate, they were less able to leave defences of their own tenets and practices; the representations of their adversaries are to be weighed with the more caution; but even these furnish abundant arguments for their excellence. Their rigid austerity is among their crimes; few were equal, it is said, to the demands of the most perfect class; into that the rest of the fraternity were only admitted on their dying beds. Most of the following, esteemed heretics, were probably of the same denomination.

AN. 1120. Peter de Bruys, in Provence, was at the head of the sect called from him Petrobrusians. He inveighed against the vices and superstitions of the times, and boldly attacked the ecclesiastical tyranny and abuses of Rome as anti-christian. The enraged clergy stirred up the populace, and he was burnt alive, not judicially, but in a tumult, raised by the priests. Indeed, had he been heard, the most profitable articles of their trade had been utterly depreciated; as he denied the efficacy of indulgences, and affirmed, that the prayers or oblations of the living could be of no avail to the dead—he asserted also, that the body of Christ was only in the Eucharist, in *figure*, not *reality*—that crucifixes and all the objects of superstitious devotion were abominable—that churches had no peculiar sanctity, but that God might every where be served acceptably by his spiritual worshippers. These and other like tenets, highly offensive to the priesthood, he maintained with such zeal, some say enthusiasm, as brought him to his untimely end. But the conviction of the truths which he preached did not die with him.

AN. 1147. A monk and hermit of Lausanne, named Henry, turned itinerant, and went about declaiming powerfully against the clergy, their vices and superstitions. St. Bernard encountered and routed

routed the impertinent reformer; and seized by Pope Eugenius the Third, he was condemned in a council at Rheims, and consigned to a prison, where he quickly ended his sufferings.

AN. 1115. A more exceptionable character, whether a lunatic or impostor, at Antwerp, is said to have given himself out as the Son of God. What he really taught is difficult to know, amidst the monstrous and improbable absurdities laid to his charge. Certain it is, he inveighed fiercely against the pride and scandals of the clergy, and was murdered by a furious ecclesiastic. But his followers survived him.

AN. 1139. Arnold, of Brescia, occasioned more tumult and disturbances. Condemned by Pope Innocent II. he retired for a while; but returning to Rome, in the next pontificate, he stirred up that people, always disposed to revolt against their lordly masters: and after causing much sedition, was seized, crucified, and burnt. His endeavour to strip the clergy of their possessions, and to reduce them to a moderate subsistence from the people, was high treason against the Church, and punished accordingly. Yet he left a spirit that burned for reformation, though suppressed by the strong arm of power.

AN. 1160. But the most zealous and successful reformer of the age was Peter Waldus, or Valdus, a name derived from those whose principles he had adopted. He had been a merchant of Lyons, but imbibing from the Waldenses a taste for the Scriptures, he procured a priest to translate for him the four gospels, with other books of the New Testament, into French. The diligent perusal of these, not only opened his eyes to the reigning errors and profligate manners of the clergy, but animated him with holy zeal. He quitted his profession, distributed his whole substance to the poor, and forming congregations, who embraced

AN. 1180. his opinions, he began boldly to preach and teach the doctrines of vital Christianity, and to remonstrate against the ignorance and vices of the age. The Archbishop of Lyons and his clergy, fired at these reproaches, endeavoured to silence this new apostle. But the purity of his life, the disinterested charity he displayed, the simplicity of truth which he taught, and the zeal with which he enforced his exhortations, awakened deep concern in many, and procured him a number of faithful associates and fellow labourers. These formed numerous societies in France, Italy, and throughout Europe. Nor could the most furious persecutions raised against them, or the murders committed upon them by the anathemas

them as of the Church, depress their courage, or reduce them to silence.

The doctrines which these taught, and the practices they recommended, were generally such as the Protestants have since adopted; with the exception of some few things, which they seem to have carried to extremes, as is too frequently the case with all, who, sore under the feeling of former abuses, have not learned to moderate the rigor of reform by the true apostolic model.

They admitted the established orders of bishops, presbyters, and deacons, though under a different name: but they supposed they must be men dead to the world, and destitute of wealth, earning by some honest occupation their own bread, without burdening the congregation. They regarded the riches which had been poured in upon the Church, as one of the chief sources of its corruption. They little esteemed the scientific pursuits or scholastic theology in vogue, preferring for the ministry the men of the most devoted zeal and exemplary piety, to all the learning of the schools. They supposed every man of the congregation, who possessed ability, and felt himself so disposed, might exhort and pray, confirming the hearts of the disciples. They denied all efficacy of relics, prayers, penances, to

procure pardon for sin, which God through Christ alone could bestow. They asserted, that confession to a priest was useless, as any enlightened brother could equally advise and admonish : they regarded with horror the idea of purchased dispensations and indulgences, as the fraud of sacerdotal avarice. They rejected all the *penetentiaries*, and their absurd prescriptions ; and desired that the simple ancient discipline in every congregation should be restored. They despised all services for the dead as useless ; regarded the purgatorial fire as a chimaera, designed only to rob the credulous ; and affirmed, that the state of departed spirits was irrevocably fixed for hell or heaven, the moment of their departure from the body. They renounced all dependence upon saints or martyrs, the crucifix, or the Virgin, and only trusted upon the finished redemption of Jesus Christ for life and salvation.

Their Christian walk was remarkably circum-spect. In some particulars they seem to have mistaken the directory of our Saviour, which they professed in all things to follow. But their very errors had an amiable object in them, which, if we cannot vindicate, we shall easily forgive. To all the generally received duties of gospel obedience, they added, the unlawfulness of wars of any kind—they forbade all self-defence and law-suits—they re-
fused

fused oaths of every sort—questioned the right of putting the most criminal to death—and condemned all accumulation of wealth. They were not entirely united in all their opinions, which some carried much farther than others. Some supposed the Church of Rome a true Church, though greatly departed from original simplicity; others regarded her as wholly apostate, and doomed in the head and members unto wrath to the uttermost. Some imposed on themselves peculiar self-denial in meat, drink, clothing, prayer, and fasting. Others, esteemed less perfect, conformed to the general customs in matters of indifference, but with the utmost simplicity and frugality, avoiding every appearance of pride, ostentation, or luxury. Indeed, their laborious, industrious habits engaged them nearly to approach each other, with very little inequality of wealth or station. Wisdom and superior piety alone seem to have conferred pre-eminence.

Besides these poor and despised followers of Waldus, who wonderfully multiplied through France, Switzerland, and Italy, a variety of absurd and fanatical sects arose from the fermenting corruption of the age. The *Pasagini*, who used circumcision, and were half judaical. The *Caputiati*, who bore on their caps an image of the Vir-

gin, and pretended to level all mankind to primitive equality by the abolition of all distinctions of men in Church and State. The *Apostolics*, who professed to be purely apostolical, poor, laborious, illiterate, bearded, and living in celibacy, though accompanied by a female sister, with whom they did not cohabit. *Eon*, a madman, gave himself out as *the Son of God*, and drew a multitude of disciples after him. He was condemned by the Pope, as a heretic, to perpetual imprisonment, when he should have been put under medical care for recovery.

The suppression of all these was the object of clerical jealousy and persecution. Many of them fell before the victorious arguments of St. Bernard, the censures of the Church, and the sword of the civil power. But others took deep root and spread; for, as is often the case, the zeal of the reformers was but sharpened by the sufferings to which they were exposed. Highly as I respect a late ecclesiastical historian, I am astonished at his attempt to enrol Bernard in his catalogue of evangelical religion. SAINT added to such a name, would be impious. However orthodox some of his sentiments may be, can false miracles, lying prophecies, bloody persecutions of the faithful, and servitude to the papacy and her dominion, constitute
a saint

a faint of the first water? A protestant divine disgraces his page by these commendations, and renders even the truths, which he supports and contends for as evangelical, suspicious. *Non tali auxilio aut defensoribus istis opus egit.* He might have found nobler champions than the superstitious, fraudulent, bitter, and bloody Abbot of Clairval.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

WHEN abuses are advancing to the extreme, they frequently produce their own reform. Such was the case at present. The exorbitant wealth and extravagant pretensions of the clergy, awakened the attention of many ; and some more zealous than the rest, and more intelligent and inquisitive, began to read the Scriptures, and discover the multitude of prevailing abuses, and boldly to remonstrate against them. These were branded with a variety of approbrious names by their bigotted adversaries, as Manicheans, Paulicians, Cathari, &c.

Among these, under their faithful leader, Peter, the Waldenses, who had long subsisted in the Pais de Vaud, from whence they had their name of Vaudois and Valdenses, were the most distinguished. Some suppose the name derived from an eminent teacher named Waldo, a cotemporary, and associate with Berengarius. Certain it is, from the testimony of their inquisitorial enemies, as well as their friends, that they had subsisted for centuries past in the vales of Piedmont. They are said by
Maestricht

Maestricht to have written against the errors of popery before the year 1000: and by Poplienerus, to have been diffused widely over the western world. They were condemned as "damnable heretics" by Alexander the III^d, at the synod of Tours, in the year 1163, and said to have been long since spread through the district of Toulouse. After all the havoc made by the bloody inquisitors, they continued so numerous that the archbishops of Aix, of Arles, and of Narbonne, informed the Pope that it was impossible to build prisons sufficiently capacious to hold the heretics, or to procure them food, and therefore desired his holiness to advise what should be done. "All these," says Mezeray, "held almost the same opinions as those who are now called Calvinists." From France they crossed the seas into England; and, as appears by the persecution which was raised against them by Henry AN. 1160. II. and his popish bishops, had widely diffused their doctrine, and become objects of prelatical odium. Clark, in his Martyrology, records about twenty eminent witnesses in England before Wickliff, and observes, that, "though many times the saints of God were compelled to hide themselves, and underwent grievous persecutions, yet he still preserved a seed alive, to bear witness against the anti-christian corruptions." Thus in many lands the seeds of gospel truth and future reformation were dispersed; and henceforth the persecutions

secutions raised against them demonstrate the wide spreading contagion of what the enemies of true Christianity branded as heresy. From their increasing numbers and their attempts to stem the torrent of superstition, they grew into observation; and though inferior in rank, comparatively few, prophesying in sack-cloth, and exposed to every insult and suffering, it was evident the Lord had not forsaken the earth, nor left himself without witnesses.

And not only among these and others which have been mentioned was a holy seed preserved, but in the East, it is to be hoped that many yet served God in spirit and in truth, whether under the denomination of Mystics, Paulicians or Nestorians. And in the Greek Church, amidst the general degeneracy, some of the poor of the flock probably were preserved from the prevailing ignorance and superstitions, escaping like Job with the skin of their teeth.

The disputes that were afloat, however ridiculous and unprofitable many of them might be, kept enquiry awake, and called for investigation of the fathers, and sometimes at least of the sacred records; and if borne down by numbers, and deterred by danger, many in silence, or among a few of their confidential friends held the truth, in the light and
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the love of it, here and there, both in the East and West, a daring spirit ventured to promulge, what he believed to be true and important, and suffered for the testimony he bore.

It is evident in France, England, Switzerland, Lombardy, Moravia, and Bohemia, there was still a poor and scattered people, who dared to be singular; and probably throughout the Christian world a generation of a like spirit might be found, though their obscurity of station, dispersion, and fewness in number brought them not into observation, nor exposed them to such persecution as would render them objects of history. The true kingdom of God cometh not with the outward parade of human greatness; it is not of this world; it is hid with Christ in God, and so probably will be to the end of time; until the glory of the latter day shall produce a general and blessed diffusion of gospel truth and power throughout the world, and usher in the reign of grace and righteousness, when the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ.

CENTURY XIII.

CHAP. I.

PROGRESS OF THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

FRESH scenes of blood disfigure the face of the Christian world. The Roman pontiffs had reaped so many advantages from the zeal of the crusaders, that they pertinaciously adhered to these holy expeditions, from which they so abundantly filled their coffers by donations or purchases of those who emigrated, or from the indulgences and absolutions granted to others, who in a fit of zeal having crossed themselves chose to stay at home, and reap the benefits without sharing the toil and danger. It had been sufficiently condemnable to have turned their weapons unprovoked against the Saracenic hosts; but when the same crusading rage is directed against Christian brethren under the pretence of heresy; and murder sanctioned under the name of zeal for truth, horror stiffens at the sight; and waits to see the divine vengeance inflicted, when to those who are drunk with the blood of the saints, God will give them blood to drink.

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The declining, or rather desperate state of the Christian Church in Palestine roused the zeal of Innocent III.; and the trumpet was again blown, that the European princes and people might fly to the succour of the holy city. But their zeal had been frozen up by the ill-success of past efforts, and they turned a deaf ear to the pontiff's call. A few animated French nobles leagued with the Vene-

tians, and stimulated by the holy father, AN. 1203. roused themselves to the battle; but they stopped short in their career. Ambitious candidates for the throne of Constantinople

tempted them on their march to turn aside, and the swords sharpened for the necks of the Saracens, were died in the best blood of Greece.

AN. 1204. Twice the city of Constantinople was taken; that decaying empire rent in twain; a Grecian and a Latin Emperor contending for dominion; whilst the Mahomedans were ready to fall upon both, alike weakened by their divisions. During this conflict of more than fifty years, till Michael Palæologus recovered his imperial city, these Christians, instead of falling on their foes, devoured one another. AN. 1261.

AN. 1217. A new crusade was therefore urged by a succeeding pontiff, Honorius, and an army levied under Andrew, King of Hungary, and many princes of the empire and Italy: but the general
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in chief returned to Europe; and after a gleam of success, destruction from famine and the sword lost Damietta, the fortrefs which they had gained; and the army mouldered into dust.

AN. 1223. These miseries and misfortunes cooled not the zeal of the Pope and his legates, whose gain bore a proportion with the crusaders' losses. Frederic the II^d, the German Emperor, enlisted under the banner of the Cross, at the instigation of the holy see; but detained by domestic difficulties, he deferred from time to time the execution of the project, which he had truly at heart; till the stimulus of papal excommunication,

AN. 1227. launched against him by Gregory IX. accelerated his motions; though he

appears to have highly repented the papal insolence, and in a letter to the King of England, Henry the Third, charged that audacious see with just criminations of avarice, ambition, hypocrisy, and pretensions, against which every crowned head should be on their guard. The expedition of Frederic was successful. His force awed the sultan of Egypt; and he obtained without bloodshed by treaty, and a truce for ten years, what the others had fought by arms in vain. Crowned King of Jerusalem, with great pomp, he returned to Italy to appease the discords which the ambition of

AN. 1229. Rome had fomented in his absence; and

and instead of the flattering reception he justly hoped, he met the most insolent reproaches from the Pope and his partisans, whose schemes of aggrandisement he thus disappointed.

AN. 1239. At the expiration of the truce, the Pope founded the tocsin. Theobald, King of Navarre, and many French and German nobles embarked in two fresh expeditions, both of which ended in confusion; chiefly owing to divisions between the Knights Templars, and the Knights of Jerusalem, fomented by the perfidious prelate of Rome in opposition to the Emperor, whose party in Palestine he wished to weaken. Richard, Earl of Cornwall, followed with as ineffectual efforts, and an inglorious truce was all he could obtain. AN. 1241.

AN. 1248. The King of France, St. Lewis, a title dearly earned by crusading folly, in consequence of a vow made on occasion of his recovery from a dangerous illness, sailed for Egypt at the head of a numerous army, with all the benedictions and assurance of success which Rome could bestow; but, alas! the same scene was renewed; a momentary success was followed by famine, pestilence and defeat; the King himself, his two brothers, and all his army were taken prisoners by the Saracens, and compelled to ransom himself by a sum of money, which his kingdom could with difficulty produce,

produce, and to which the Pope contributed not a livre: leaving behind him in the sands of Egypt the corpses of his numerous host, and out of two thousand eight hundred knights of illustrious fame who accompanied him, only one hundred saw their native land again. The desolation and impoverishment which this caused in the kingdom of France, must have been deplorable; and the state of Christianity in the East more desperate than ever.

AN. 1270. Lewis, superstitious as valiant, and elevated by the commendations of the pontiff for his zeal towards the catholic church, meditated the recovery of his blasted fame, by a renewed expedition against the infidels; and chusing Africa for the scene of his conquests, sailed for the bay of Tunis, hoping to reduce to the Christian obedience, that vanquished and apostate country, and to recover the treasures he had expended; but the same calamities overwhelmed him. Pestilence devoured more than the sword, and he died inglorious on the bed of disease: his army reduced, his conquests abandoned, and the remnant glad to retire to their own coasts, and leave the victorious Saracens masters of the East. Thus ended these miserable and fanatic crusades, with the loss of millions of men; the desolation of the countries which were the scenes of conflict; the impoverishment of Europe; and the disgrace as well as destruction

struction of all who engaged in them. The last of the eastern possessions, Ptolemais, yielded to the Mahomedan yoke before the end of the century, and the smallest vestige of the Christian power was obliterated. AN. 1291.

It is shocking to reflect on these expeditions to which the Christian zeal seems to have been peculiarly directed by the craft of the see of Rome. The liberal and plenary indulgences granted to the warriors, engaged the most profligate to earn the remission of their sins, and secure a certainty of heaven, by enlisting under the banners of the Cross. Their lives continued the same, and the records of their abominations remain. Their friends suffered from them as much as their enemies, and they were nearly as much dreaded by those whom they came to defend, as by those they meant to conquer. The turbulent passions of ambition fermented in every bosom; and the Popes always jealous of the Emperors, and seeking to exalt themselves, fomented by their intrigues and their legates, the divisions, which proved more fatal than the arms of the Saracens; disappointed the best concerted enterprises, and defeated the most prosperous commencements. To this chiefly is the ruin of the Christian cause to be imputed, which never should have been supported by weapons of this warfare: but

God justly thus punished wicked and false Christians by their own hands, and their own devices.

The northern pagans had not yet wholly submitted. The barbarous Prussians obstinately retained the worship of their Gods. As missionary zeal was either intimidated or proved to be vain; more effectual methods were pursued by Conrad, Duke of Massovia, and the Knights of the Teutonic Order, who driven from Palestine, were still ready to fight the battles of the Church against
AN. 1230. all infidels. A long and bloody war followed. The superiority of military skill at last vanquished pagan valour; and those who would not be baptised in blood were compelled to submit to the water of baptism and the sign of the cross. Livonia is said to have received the same treatment, and its inhabitants became good Christians, and obedient to the Roman see, for that was now the essence of Christianity.

Spain, long flourishing under the dominion of the Caliphs, divided into principalities, and weakened by quarrels among themselves, became an easier conquest to its former masters. The Christians rallied under their leaders: conquest after conquest, Castile, Arragon and Navarre, reduced the Saracenic territories, and prepared for the fall of
Valentia,

Valentia, Grenada, and Murcia, which yet remained to their former possessors. Those who, AN. 1236. after many efforts to convert them, refused to return to the Christian pale, were by the unchristian influence of Clement IV. compelled to abandon their country, and leave those fruitful fields which their industry cultivated, a desert; and such they remain unto this day.

Nor were the desolations of the Christian name in Asia scarcely less afflictive: though traces still remained of Nestorian zeal in China and Tartary. The Mogul masters now become Mahomedans, oppressed them, but employed not the bloody means which Christians used with Christians; they put them under tribute, they proposed to them every allurements to apostatize, but they neither burnt nor dragooned them, as their own brethren in the West were doing.

The rising hosts of rebels against the holy see alarmed the pontiffs, more than all the conquests of the Saracens, and therefore against them during this century the weapons of war, ecclesiastical and civil, were particularly sharpened. It would be too extensive a field to recount all the persons, names and sects that called forth the Roman fury. The heaviest weight fell upon the south of France, where under the general title of Albigenes and

Waldenses, were comprised all who resisted the claims of papal dominion, and refused to comply with the imperious dictates of its pontiff, or wished reformation in the Church, both in its head and members. Raimond VI. of Toulouse, in whose

territory this heresy was supposed to prevail, in vain attempted to ward off destruction from himself by embracing the

papal party: blood and massacres ruined his country, and Montfort, who had the honour, or rather the disgrace conferred on him, of executing

AN. 1215. the papal decrees against these heretics, zealously accomplished the mandates of

his bloody employers, that he might gain the dominions of Raymond as his reward; with which he was solemnly invested for his support of the cause of God and the Church; but the struggle ended not with the deaths of the first combatants. Another Raymond, and another Earl of Montfort renewed the conflict, and the great King of France,

Lewis VIII. engaged by the solicitations AN. 1229. and promises of the Pope, cast his enormous weight into the scale against the poor persecuted Christians; and he and the Pope divided the spoil of the vanquished count of Toulouse. The inquisition established in this capital piously laboured to extirpate by fire and imprisonment, the remains of the pretended heretical crew. The plea was heresy, but the real moving cause was ambition,

ambition, pride and avarice. Yet after thousands upon thousands sacrificed on the Romish altar of Moloch, by inquisitors filled with every demoniacal principle of cruelty and hatred, the cause had taken too deep root to be extirpated; and though suppressed in one part broke out in another, till the happy day of reformation came, and the tyger no longer permitted to ravin as before, was chained, and now through mercy his teeth are drawn and his claws so pared, that though still permitted to occupy his den, he is become despised and contemptible, and his end approaching: and old as I am, I hope to live to see the Scripture fulfilled—"Rejoice over her ye heavens, &c." Rev. xviii. 20.

Note.—It is scarce two years since this expectation was expressed. The events which have since happened have hastened the period with a rapidity then little expected.

CHAP. II.

THE INTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

THE desolations without were great, but the disorders within were greater. The eastern patriarch, like the sun in a mist, shorn of his beams, saw his greatness decline with the empire; whilst in the West, the Roman pontiff, *sitting in the temple of God, shewed himself as God*; assuming and exercising, as far as circumstances admitted, universal authority, and rising in the full splendor of majesty over all persons and causes supreme.

The maxim established by the Popes and their partisans, was, that, “all governors, civil and ecclesiastical, derived all lawful authority from the Roman see, and its pontiff as Christ’s vicegerent upon earth.” Emperors and bishops were alike to be subject to their controul, and all ecclesiastical benefices might be disposed of by them of their proper right. But the monarchs being not quite passive either in Germany, France, or England, these lordly claims were rejected; and though a thousand encroachments were submitted to in an hour of weakness, they struggled hard to preserve their regalities, and to repress the overwhelming pretensions

pretensions of the supposed successors of the fisherman of Galilee. The *pragmatic sanction* of Lewis the Ninth, erected a barrier against this tyranny of

Rome, and provided for the liberties
AN. 1268. of the Gallician Church; as the statutes of Clarendon had done before for the British; but the artful and imperious legates, seconding their ambitious masters, seized every occasion, and improved every opportunity to carry into effect their most insolent pretensions. They made no scruple when they dared of violating the privileges of the chapters and churches, intruding upon them their own creatures, or those who had bribed them; and overawing their opposers with the terrors of excommunication, they plundered the people by the basest pretences, and shamefully trafficked with relics and indulgences, to support their own enormous vices, and to furnish their lordly master with the treasures of the universe, the base tribute paid by credulity to fraud and arrogance.

The pontiffs themselves, improving the moment of opportunity, when contests between pretenders to the imperial throne, gave them peculiar importance, sold their suffrage for valuable acquisitions; or for connivance at the seizures, which they thought it convenient for them to make. Thus Ancona, Spoleto, Affisi, and many other cities of Italy were reduced under their dominion: and Rodolph, of Hapsburgh,

was not permitted to receive the imperial crown till he had confirmed all former gifts made to the holy see, and sanctioned all its later robberies.

AN. 1278. From their high and lofty place they conferred royalty on such as they favoured, a King of Bohemia, of Bulgaria, of Armenia, obtained their regal titles from his holiness Innocent III.; and Peter, of Arragon, received from the Pope's hand at Rome his crown and dignity in return for subjecting his dominions to the papal see.

And their wrath was terrible, as their favour was supreme. The thunders of excommunication were successively hurled by the same Innocent, against the Emperors Philip and Otho: and for a domestic quarrel between man and wife, against Augustus, King of France, whom he compelled to take back his repudiated Queen.

But none received such insulting treatment as John, the King of England. He had despised the Pope's interference and insolent attempt to impose upon the realm, as Archbishop of Canterbury, Langton, his creature; but an interdict first and then the terrible excommunication shook the pillars of his throne. Nor did Innocent rest here, but after absolving the subjects of John from their oath of allegiance, he had the audacity in a council of
cardinals

cardinals and bishops, to depose the
AN. 1212. British monarch, and bestow the crown
on the French King, who was invited
to execute the sentence, and take possession of the
papal fief. Fortified with every indulgence granted
to the holy crusaders, the Dauphin of France with
his army prepared to enter England. Pandulph,
the legate, seized the moment of triumph, when
the turbulence of the barons, and the dread of the
approaching crusaders wrought upon the fears of
the coward monarch; and meanly humbling him-
self, he laid his crown at this proud prelate's feet,
who retained it five days, and then restored it to
the worthless wearer, as a favour from Rome, held
on the payment of 1000 marks a year
AN. 1213. to his pontifical superior. One is as
much amazed at the audacity which
could presume on such an outrage, as at the pusil-
lanimity which could submit to it.

Though crossed for the Holy Land, this defend-
ed not Frederic II. from the thunders of the Vati-
can; and when his victorious return demanded
every token of gratitude, he found the treacherous
pontiff had watched the moment of his absence to
seize upon Apuglia, and stir up the European
powers against him. His presence defeating the
Pope's ambitious projects, a short reconciliation
was

was succeeded by renewed fulminations.

AN. 1227. Frederic now defended his right by arms, and his character by confutations of the lying prelate, whom he pressed hard : but the imperious haughtiness of Gregory brooked not submission. A council of cardinals and prelates was summoned to depose the valiant and deserving head of the Empire ; and arms and

AN. 1239. allies prepared to execute the sentence ; but all was defeated by the vigour of Frederic, who seized the fleet, conveying the bishops and their treasure to Rome : interrupted the council ; and confounded all the malice of his adversary ; who sickening with rage, vexation, and disappointment, ended his miserable days. AN. 1241.

AN. 1244. His successor with equal haughtiness renewed the sentence of excommunication, deposed the Emperor, and called on the German Princes to fill the vacant throne ; and such was the dread of his spiritual arms that they consented. And whilst Frederic prepared to vindicate his crown against rebellion and insolence, death laid him in the dust. AN. 1250.

AN. 1269. It is too long to repeat the series of papal exploits. The unhappy fate of Conradin, King of the Sicilies, cannot but excite compassion ; murdered by the connivance, if not by the advice of
Clement

Clement the Fourth, who had bestowed on the barbarous Lewis of Anjou the throne of Naples—a disposal contrary to all laws human or divine.

A disputed election in Germany gave Gregory X. an occasion of issuing his mandates, and both the princes who had been elected by the several parties, were obliged to give way to Rodolph of Hapsburgh, whom the Pope's favour raised to the imperial throne. AN. 1272.

AN. 1281. Where such deference was paid to claims the most audacious, we cannot but expect that presumption would be hardened to dare greater outrages. The Emperor of the East, Palæologus, was excommunicated by Martin, as was Peter of Arragon, deposed, and his kingdom conferred on Charles of France. AN. 1284.

AN. 1294. Boniface VIII. who closed the century, surpassed all his predecessors. He pushed all their claims with an obstinacy approaching to madness, insensible to all the mischiefs occasioned by his wild ambition, and resolved to try the patience of the prostrate world.

Where such was the head, what must the members be? The legates in every country exhibited a faithful representation of their master, and abuses
on

on abuses multiplied. Proud, avaricious, profligate, their examples corrupted as much as their rapaciousness devoured. Every tongue confessed the flagitious conduct of the clergy, who, armed with all the spiritual terrors, and possessed of the keys of Paradise, despised the slaves, who crouched to them for absolution : and in the confidence of security, regarded not their enemies, but as persons on whom they might glut their enmity with impunity, and plunder without remorse.

To check the rising spirit of rebellion against these ghostly teachers, and to nip heresy in the bud, not only the secular arm was called in to destroy without mercy, but a new monkish army levied, of all colours, to counteract the dreaded attempts of ecclesiastical reformation, and support every extravagant pretension of the Roman see.

AN. 1215. The different orders which arose, some of which were presently suppressed, are scarce worth enumeration. One great society only deserves particular mention : *The Mendicants*, instituted by Innocent III. The Monks, who wallowed in wealth, and, as was natural, corrupted themselves in the abuse of it, were judged incapable of raising a barrier against the multitudes of those, who were disaffected to the Church : whose lives forming the strongest contrast with the clergy, whom

whom they reviled, drew away crowds of disciples after them, and threatened more general defection. This new order therefore renouncing all possessions, begging their daily bread from door to door, coarsely clad, and girt with a rope; some barefooted, and all affecting sanctity of the highest cast, filled the world. Favoured by the pontiffs, for whom all their zeal was exhausted, and on whom they depended, the extirpation of heresy, and the support of the papal power were their grand objects. These multiplying like locusts upon the earth, were divided into four great bodies of Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and hermits of St. Augustin. The two former being the great communities, and by their mutual jealousy of superiority provoking bitter animosities and quarrels, on them I shall chiefly dwell.

The influence which these beggars obtained it is impossible to tell. Seduced by their sanctimonious appearance, their meritorious poverty, and the favour of the Roman pontiffs, the world bowed down before them; their cord bound men as with links of iron, and kings and prelates trembled. Entrusted generally with absolution and indulgences, they became the spiritual guides universally, and engrossed by degrees all power, and all employments.

But,

But, as their chief object was heresy, against this was all their zeal concentrated ; and abundant occasion arose for its exercise, as heresy had then taken a new form, and was applied not so much to those, who perverted the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, as to all who presumed to censure any of the abuses of the Romish Church, and to expose the insolence, pride, and ambition of its pontiffs ; in whose dictates all truth was supposed to be found, and to doubt or dispute their decisions was mortal sin, and made the offender liable to every torment. The bloody Dominic, a Spaniard, was at the head of one of these begging fraternities. A man, suited by nature for an inquisitor ; acute, violent, unfeeling, overbearing, indefatigable. He set out for France, the focus of heresy, and with his begging associates, preached, caressed, threatened, promised ; and those whom he could not prevail upon by the eloquence of his discourses, he subdued by the terrors of the secular arm, leagued to destroy these presumptuous advocates for reformation. On his return to Italy, accumulated honours from the papal see stimulated afresh his zeal, and those of his fraternity. Reduced by him to the strictest rules of poverty and obedience, a numerous host enlisted under his banners ; they were from their leader named Dominicans, from their labours *preaching friars*, and from their garb *black friars* ; a place where

where they were first settled in London at their coming to England, still retains their name.

AN. 1233. To this black and bloody regiment was chiefly entrusted the inquisitorial work : and for the benefit of their souls, men's bodies were committed to the flames. Wherever a place was suspected of heresy, a court of these blood-hounds was erected with powers, which none dared resist ; to hunt out, examine, condemn, and extirpate all those who presumed to find fault with Rome, or her minions. Suspicion was sufficient to justify torture : compelled to answer interrogatories, none were exempt from falling into their snares, whom they chose to condemn. A different mode from all judicial procedure ever before instituted in the world, invested them with power to find victims, and constitute crimes. The horrible

AN. 1229. edicts of Frederic the Second, and of St. Lewis, that hater of heretics, issued at the instigation of Rome, make the blood run cold. That monarchs could so easily devote to racks, gibbets, and tortures of every kind, the most inoffensive of their subjects, merely under a charge of heresy, and to gratify the tyranny of Rome and her savage partisans, is astonishing. The atrocious barbarities of Conrad, of Marpurg, one of the first inquisitors in Germany, are on record ; till he fell himself a victim to the horrors he excited.

cited. The same was the case with Pierre de Castelnau, the pontifical legate and inquisitor in France, whom the enraged populace murdered, revolting at his merciless massacres. By these and their fellows, the insolent pontiff expected to trample on the prostrate world, and to root out every tongue that muttered against his blasphemies, tyranny, and hypocrisy; and could an arm of flesh prevail, his triumphs had been compleat: for more innocent blood was now shed by the hand of these conspirators against the truth, than perhaps had ever flowed under the cruellest of the pagan emperors: but power and craft are alike in vain against the Lord. When God will work, none shall let it.

AN. 1223. The Franciscans were the worthy associates with their black brethren in this spiritual crusade for the extirpation of heresy. Francis of Assisi, an Italian, from a man of profligate manners, become a devotee, established the order which bears his name. Ignorant, fanatic, devout, zealous, devoted to Rome, his numerous followers embraced the rigid poverty he prescribed, and clothed with the most humiliating name of *little brethren*, or *minors*, united to bring down the mightiest monarchs and their kingdoms to the feet of the Roman pontiffs. These zealous partisans of St. Peter, the politic popes clothed with extraordinary

ordinary prerogatives, to confess, to absolve, and be the medium of distributing those wondrous indulgences that covered the transgressor from all apprehension of punishment, for sins past, present, or to come. The bishops and secular clergy, with envy saw their choicest prerogatives sacrificed to these squalid mendicants, and all their jurisdiction superseded by these intruders into their several folds; whilst emperors and kings, as well as pontiffs, employed them in all their important affairs, political and temporal, as well as ecclesiastical; finding them the most adroit negociators, as well as the most confidential envoys.

Had these orders cordially united with each other and among themselves, more dreadful had been the state of the Christian world. Their numbers, fanaticism, obedience, devotion to Rome, activity, power, influence, could hardly have been withstood, and superstition and tyranny might have established their dominion for ever. But these sturdy beggars could neither agree with each other, nor among themselves. Jealousy for their order, claims of superior sanctity and pre-eminence, and the jarring interests, where two beggars met at the same door, raised a spirit of enmity not easily appeased by the pontiffs themselves. They loaded each other with the bitterest invectives, and the foulest accusations; and could not share content-

edly the spoil they had extorted. They often treated all other orders, and the whole body of the clergy with sovereign contempt ; pretending that the true method of salvation was peculiarly revealed to them and to their order only ; and that they had an especial commission from God. They boasted of their superior intimacy with the Almighty, and the Virgin Mary, and all the saints in glory ; and of consequence their especial interest in heaven.

To vie with their brethren in excellence, the general of the Carmelite order produced a revelation, expressly given him by the Virgin Mary, that whoever departed this life, with the Carmelite *scapulary* on his shoulders, might go to heaven's gate direct, and be admitted by St. Peter, and no questions asked. And this ridiculous story, even pontiffs, and those, like Benedict XIV. of the more liberal cast, sanctioned and defended.

The austerities of their order divided the Franciscans among themselves. The original rule of absolute poverty had been dispensed with by the imperious Gregory the Ninth. But the most *spiritual* bigots would not permit even a Pope to alter the constitutions of their founder, or receive the mitigation proposed, of a right to the *use* of things given them, whilst the *property* vested in St. Peter and his successors. They would be *absolute beggars,*

gars, in spite of the Pope himself. These ridiculous contests between the *spiritual* and those of the *mitigated* rule, employed Pope after Pope to refrain and terminate them in vain.

AN. 1226. A farrago of fanatical prophecies produced by one Joachim, of the rigid order of Franciscans, and commented upon by another *spiritual* father, named Gerhard, widened the domestic breach. The *spiritual* and austere embraced this book, called *the Everlasting Gospel*, proclaiming *the perfect age of the Holy Ghost*, now arrived under the ministry of St. Francis, who was the very angel St. John saw, Rev. xiv. 6; and his bare-footed followers were to be the distinguished ministers of this final dispensation of perfection. The University of Paris appeared exceedingly offended at these pretensions; and the literati taking up the quarrel, compelled Pope Alexander IV. though with much reluctance, to condemn the book; for he feared this might prejudice his mendicant satellites in the eyes of the world, and he wished nothing more than to maintain their reputation unsullied. AN. 1255.

The disputes which the Popes in vain attempted to smother, between the *spiritual* Franciscans and their brethren, broke out afresh; and as the see

of Rome had espoused the one party, the other spared not the head itself: and in a comment on the Revelations, Pierre de Olive, one of the most fanatical of the order, whilst he exalts St. Francis, as *entirely transformed into the person of Christ*, brands the papal see, as *the whore of Babylon, and the mother of harlots*. Olive being a man of most sanctimonious deportment, and revered by the multitude as a prophet sent from Heaven, gave great weight to the party of the rigid Franciscans. Different generals of the order, as they were more indulgent or austere, favoured each side alternately. In vain new attempts were formed by popes to reduce the more *spiritual* to the *mitigated rule*; they refused to admit any mitigations, nor could the terrors of Boniface VIII. compel them to desist from the renunciation of all *right of use*, and to pride themselves in absolute beggary and poverty.

Under *Celestin V.* they hoped to have formed a separate order. As he was nearly austere as themselves, he favoured their pretensions, and consented to erect them into a new order, under the name of *Celestin Hermits of St. Francis*. But this favour was of a short date: his successor annulled his acts, and suppressed the institution; and thus the *spirituals* had again to conflict with the Pope, and with their brethren.

The

The worldly-minded of the order, beggars as they were by profession, were strenuous for the *use* of the good things which they possessed, in whomsoever the Pope was pleased to vest *the property*. Having Boniface on their side, they goaded their more strait laced brethren with unrelenting severity ; and peaked at the insolence of any who dared resist his decisions, the Pope determined to subdue their obstinacy. A grievous persecution was stirred up against them through Italy, where they had greatly spread : and many of them fell victims to the bigotry of their brethren, under the horrible process of inquisitorial cruelty.

Nearly related to these were the *Fratricelli*, who professing the most literal adherence to the rule of St. Francis, renounced both the *possession*, and *right of use* of all things, and begged in rags their daily bread from door to door. As they were persecuted by the Roman see, they retorted bitterly on Rome, and its pontiffs, and the contrast of their rags and poverty, with clerical magnificence, spoke a language that many highly respected.

From these sprung one branch of the sect called *Beghards*, who, though attached to St. Francis, were but the lay brethren of the *Fratricelli*. The particularities of each would lead me into minutiae, beyond the bounds I have prescribed to myself.

self. Suffice it only to observe, that by these, a spirit of opposition to papal wealth and tyranny was kept up; and strangely fanatic as were their opinions and conduct; and bitter as their enmity was against heretics, they ultimately served to keep alive the conflict with abused power, and led men to examine the claims of the pontifical see.

I cannot quit the history of the Franciscans, without the mention of one who will be for ever dear to Englishmen. Roger Bacon, commonly called Friar Bacon, ranks above the greatest geniuses of that age: he displayed scientific attainments far beyond the ideas of the times in which he lived, and laid the foundations for the noble superstructure, that a Boyle and a Newton afterwards erected. Deep in astronomy, chemistry, optics, and mathematics, as profound in philosophy and theology, he was condemned as having intercourse with the devil; since no human faculties were supposed equal to his universal knowledge. And it must be owned, that Aquinas, St. Amour and Bonaventura, the other boasted scholars of the day, were, comparatively with him, children in understanding. Among the deep discoveries he made was the composition of gunpowder: though probably his humanity engaged him to conceal the deadly invention, fearing its destructive effects to mankind.

This

This prodigy of learning had few who trod in his steps of experimental physics, or at all approached his excellence. The flagyrite was enthroned, and the scholastic theology dominant universally. The acute and learned disputant exhausted all the shafts of his quiver in Aristotelian subtleties, and frivolous contests, on matters of little utility to the interests of real science or mankind.

The learned works of morals and theology, in folio, multiplied abundantly, whilst religious knowledge and practice were equally debased. No man ventured without danger to suspect the grossest frauds of superstition, or to doubt the efficacy of relics, and the ceremonies of religion. The tyranny of Rome was submitted to with the most abject devotion; and every prerogative of the holy see defended with the most furious zeal; whilst the fundamental doctrines of the Bible were disregarded; and purity of heart and life was almost unknown: but the impious doctrine of human merit found the mightiest monkish support; and it was affirmed, that whoever chose it, might perform a more perfect obedience than God required, and lay up a store of works of supererogation, to enrich the treasury of the Church. The very sordid garb of a mendicant was a robe of righteousness.

AN. 1215. The Pope, by his own authority, now claimed a right to establish articles of faith; and in the fourth Lateran council, published his decrees, which the assembled bishops were to hear and obey. Then first the term *transubstantiation* by his authority became established, and *auricular confession* universally imposed, mighty engines in the hands of sacerdotal jugglers. The absurd notions of propitiating God by self-inflicted

AN. 1260. punishments, produced the *flagellantes*, who filled the air with shrieks, and covered their bodies with gore, in honour of God and his saints; and acquired no small measure of veneration by these severities. Indeed, the vogue into which this discipline came, occasioned such tumults and concourse, as compelled the popes and emperors to check by edicts these fanatic exercises.

The wretched mode in which morals were taught by the most admired writers, such as Thomas Aquinas, and others, tended to divert the mind from attending to the acquisition of holy affections, and a conversation in heaven. Endless definitions of virtues and vices, intermixed with the solution of curious and useless questions, displayed their own deep logical subtleties; and the ideas affixed to their virtues and vices, were so totally diverse from the real graces of the spirit, and the works of the flesh, as
described

described in the scriptures of truth, that it was impossible to discern any similitude between them.

Holiness and charity consisted not in pure affections, and faith working by love in all its blessed influences ; but in giving alms to the ragged fraternity of mendicants, building churches, endowing monasteries, and in perfect and unresisting obedience to all the dictates of the holy see. *Humility*, instead of a lowly sense of our unworthy selves and sinful services, now stood in a tattered garment, bound with a cord, and bare feet, begging from door to door, to accumulate a store of merit for those who chose to purchase it. *Truth*, no longer respected the revealed word of prophets and apostles, but centred in quotations from the fathers, the decrees of popes, the canons of councils, and the dogmas of the schools. *Justice* implied not the defence of the natural rights of mankind, but the tormenting and plundering every man called heretic, and who refused a blind submission to papal impositions. When the sources of morals were thus dried up, or diverted from the true channel, the conduct which would follow, grounded on these new definitions, may easily be conceived, and was awfully exemplified in the most atrocious crimes committed under the pretext of zeal, and the most abominable indulgences granted to the vilest of mankind.

Many

Many complaints of the wickedness of the present age, and the corruptions of the Church, are heard and believed : and never was there an age, wherein these complaints were not true ; but I confess myself so partial to the present times, that I must avow my conviction, on comparing the principles generally admitted, and the practices approved, that I see none superior to our own. I am sure in ignorance and immorality the past have far exceeded us. And we have only to read many of the writers of that day to be convinced, that infidelity and atheism bore an equal proportion with the progress of superstition. And to this the Aristotelian dialectics greatly contributed, which maintained the impious maxim, that what was *theologically false*, might be *philosophically true*.

CHAP. III.

ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT, DISPUTES, HERESIES,
RITES AND CEREMONIES.

THIS was the meridian splendor of papal domination. Unresisting submission was paid to the pontifical decrees ; the whole ecclesiastic corps was drilled to passive obedience ; and even monarchs held a precarious sceptre, surrendering their kingdoms as voluntary fiefs, and becoming creatures of the holy see. We have seen how far the pontifical pretensions extended, and the success attending them. The stoutest trembled before the papal anathemas, and the most stubborn was obliged to yield to the stern obstinacy of persevering ambition.

The clouds of locusts that rose from the bottomless pit, blackened the face of the sun. Their armies, marshalled under the generals of different *orders*, fought the battles of the see of Rome. The clergy, sufficiently corrupt before, proceeded in luxury according to their affluence : and the new hosts of monks contributed to seize the fruits of industry, to support the vices of beggary ; whilst he that departed

parted from evil, and refused to be the dupe of superstition, and the prey of sacerdotal rapine, was sure to be marked as a heretic and devoted to destruction. That heretics abounded, in the eye of the Church at least, is evident from the methods invented to suppress them throughout the Christian world, and the violent means used to remedy the violence of the distemper. But of those who bore the name of heretic, the characters were wonderfully different. In one thing they generally concurred, "in rejecting the monstrous system of superstitions established; and in declaiming against the wealth, tyranny, and abuses of the Pope and his clergy." With various intermediate shades, the heretics seem to be of two sorts; *men of genuine piety and religion*, who, taking the word of God for their rule of life, adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, by a conversation becoming godliness. These treated with contempt the self-instituted rules of monastic superstition, and all the idle and useless ceremonials of religion, endeavouring to worship God in spirit and in truth. They formed congregations without the pageantry of devotion, and appointed their ministers for their piety, not their scientific attainments, or devotedness to Rome. But there were *others said to be of a different stamp*, who, under affectation of liberty and emancipation from all restraint, indulged opinions as fanatical and adverse to the purity of the gospel,

gospel, as their lives were a disgrace to the name of Christian. These went under a variety of denominations; and some carried their errors to a more dangerous and desperate extreme than others. Some of the *mystic sect* were contemplative, and placed perfection in abstractedness from the world, silent meditation, and declined all ordinances, supposing devotion was wholly internal: others pretended to the eradication of every passion; and professing superiority to temptation, lived together, men and women promiscuously, going naked, and sleeping together, as they affirmed, with the most perfect purity; whilst others indulged in every excess of appetite, and taught that the divine nature within them received no contamination from the gratifications of the flesh—not a few renouncing all pretence to religion, and denying the being and attributes of God, as well as revelation, lived as they list, and ridiculed the impositions which they so easily detected.

There were also many more said to be highly enthusiastic, who imitated all the practices of the mendicants, and with a still more squalid dress if possible, and maniacal wildness, roamed about the world and lived upon alms. These were all persecuted by the inquisitors with unrelenting cruelty, under the name of Albigenes, Turlupins, Beghards, Brethren

Brethren of the free Spirit, Cathari, Petrobrusians, Apostolics, and other appellations, which enmity or contempt had fixed upon them: and many of these expired in torment with the most sedate solemnity, and the most resigned devotion, and some with the most triumphant delight. Whilst their enemies endeavoured to exaggerate their crimes, they were often compelled to bear a reluctant testimony to their exemplary virtue; but that they might diminish the lustre of their character, the dominican inquisitor, Neider, asserted, that among other mighty influences of the devil upon them, he preserved them from incontinence, by *infrigidating* their constitution.

I shall not enumerate the persons made famous by suffering, whether for the truth, as it is in Jesus, or the errors mixed with it: suffice it to observe, that whatever was the crime charged, the real cause was revolt from papal tyranny and jurisdiction; submitting to which, all the rest had been easily venial.

The grand breach between the Greek and Roman Church was wide as ever in spite of all attempts of the Roman prelate to reduce all to the unity of obedience to St. Peter. Treaty upon treaty was made and broken: when the politics of
the

the day required the Grecian Emperors to court the Roman pontiff's help, they pretended to yield a little, but they had scarce returned home from embassies and councils, ere the controversy was renewed, with inveteracy greater than ever.

The dispute about the eucharist was not yet closed by the Pope's adopting the word *transubstantiation*; many submitted to acknowledge *a real presence*, without admitting a change of the symbols: and a subtle Aristotelian doctor of the Sarbonne disputed with éclat for the modification of *consubstantiation*.

The rites and ceremonies before accumulating, continued to receive abundant additions. The WAFER GOD required a new pageantry of devotion to attend his shrine: the richest metals and jewels adorned the receptacle; the wax-tapers burned unextinguished before it; and all the parade of bowing, kneeling, and fine cloaths, attracted the veneration of the vulgar, and exalted the glory of the minister, who could make the god he devoured, and reproduce him at pleasure.

A fanatical devotee at Liege produced a revelation from heaven for the institution of a new and peculiar festival *to the holy sacrament of the real presence*.

sence. She said that she no sooner began to pray to god and his saints, than the full moon shone upon her with a remarkable spot upon it : this the spirit informed her was a defect in the Church, which the moon represented, and could only be removed by this festival. The Bishop of Liege hastened directly to brush off the spot from the moon, by observing the festival, and Urban the Sixth confirmed it by solemn edict. AN. 1264.

At this time *the religious* began the scenic representations, called *Mysteries*, of which the vulgar, great and small, were so fond ; and these tended farther to render ludicrous every thing sacred, like the *festival* of fools and *hymns* to the afs. Probably these were an invention of the mendicants, who affecting to instruct the populace by amusing them, introduced this sacred puppet-show. The persons of the drama were sometimes real, sometimes allegorical. Among these the principal were, God-Almighty, the Devil, Jesus Christ, Heresy, the Virgin Mary, and a variety of other respectable personages from heaven and hell, besides some that could be found in neither the world above or below. But every thing was sanctified that was designed for the honour of holy church, and to mark more strongly reverence for the monkish fraternity or detestation of heretics. These godly representations particularly

cularly adorned the greater festivals, and added to their pomp and majesty.

Another invention worthy the great Boniface VIII. its author, closed the present century, *the celebration of the jubilee year*; but that it might not appear a modern trick, the garb of antiquity was cast over it, and pretended evidence produced of its being the practice of ages past. As credulity was prepared to receive the grossest assertions of Rome, and a rich harvest could be gathered from the assembly of pilgrims, a proclamation was made of the wondrous benefits to be reaped from visiting the Church of St. Peter and its relics every centenary year. Full remission of sins, and showers of indulgences drew the fanatic world to the seat of holiness, to obtain these inestimable blessings, and to witness the glory, and receive the benediction of the vicegerent of God upon earth.

Bull upon bull contained the grossest contradictions respecting the institution, and the time of its celebration. The first essay was so gainful, that a hundred years was thought by the successors of Boniface too long to wait, so they reduced the term to fifty, and then to five and twenty years, for the benefit of all good Christians, who might be deprived of the transcendent advantages of the festi-

val, by not being so fortunate as to live more than a hundred years. The disorders and devotion, the debaucheries, and liberal indulgences of the pilgrims, may well be supposed from such assemblages, if the records of the times had not informed us.

Such a Church could not well fail to be marked, by all who read the Scripture, as *the Mother of all abominations*.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

THE Church of the living God began to rise more eminent to observation by the papal fires kindled around her. From the vallies of the Alps, where a holy seed had been preserved, they had now not only spread into the southern provinces of France where persecution was most bloody, but into Germany and Italy. George Morel affirms that those of the Waldensian confession in 1260 amounted to 800,000 persons.

The general name given them in Germany was *Beghards*, said to be derived from the earnestness of their prayers, and their fervour in religious duties. The translator of Mosheim, to whom with his principal I have many obligations, is pleased to resemble these to the *Methodists*, so called, of our nation, whom he brands as a *fanatical set of men*; and I am disposed to think there was a real and strong resemblance between the Methodists of this day, and the Beghards of the thirteenth century, as there must be between all men, who profess to follow wholly the divine revelation, and to be led by the same spirit of Jesus; but I am at a loss to know whence

a life of diligent prayer and deep seriousness in religion, should characterise a fanatic sect. I rather think that all good men, in all ages, exactly resembled each other in temper and spirit, and living by faith produced the same fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. That the Beghards, many of them at least, were persons of this description, we can hardly doubt, when we have the witness of their enemies to the purity of their conduct in many instances, as we have assured evidence of the patience and fortitude with which they suffered for the truths which they maintained.

That many in that day broached wild and unscriptural opinions, and acted wholly unsuitably to the purity of the gospel, we need not dispute: where the numbers of the discontented were great, and the abuses they saw so glaring, it could hardly be otherwise. But we may venture confidently to assert, that none of the miserable sufferers, in real crime and every abomination, were worse men than their inquisitorial murderers; nay, compared with these, the worst of the most fanatical sect was an angel of light.

It is impossible to reflect without wonder, considering the means employed to root out what was then called heresy, how it was preserved in the
fires;

fires ; when the power of monarchs, combined with papal authority, was seconded by all the craft and cruelty of inquisitors, and the whole mendicant tribe. A blessed body, however, though like the gleanings of the vineyard when the vintage is done, remained as a sacred seed, and continued to strike root, though watered with blood. Neither the terrors of suffering, nor the wild vagaries of the enthusiasts prevented the faithful from holding fast what they had, that none should take their crown ; but they had yet to struggle up hill for ages to come, scattered, depressed, persecuted, striving against the same strong arm of power, and the wiles of monkery, till the days of reformation.

In the East the Nestorian zeal and labours had not failed, but the light had become dim, and the churches once numerous in Asia, were reduced to a few by the pagan and Mahomedan ravagers : still I doubt not some faithful men were found ; and in the West, among all the nations professing Christianity, God had his secret ones, though small, and of no reputation. The leaven was yet fermenting, and the lump not wholly unleavened.

CENTURY XIV.

CHAP. I.

ON THE EXTERNAL STATE OF THE CHURCH.

THE zeal of the Popes for crusading had not abated, but the courage of his vassals for such expeditions was wonderfully cooled; experience had taught them the difficulty of the enterprise, and the hypocrisy of those who were the instigators to it: and therefore the Avignon and Roman pontiffs in vain employed exhortations, AN. 1307. cajoleries, threatenings, entreaties with the Kings of France and England to feel for the honour of the holy sepulchre, and merit the plenitude of indulgences from the Church. But more important and pressing considerations fixed them on their thrones; and some excuse or other constantly afforded, engaged them not to abandon their homes, for these Quixote pursuits of giants and Saracens.

Succeeding Popes even offered a part of their own immense treasures to equip a fleet and army; and opening the chest of the Church's store of indulgences disposed of them on the most liberal terms,

terms, even to those who should contribute *only their money*, though they withheld their persons. What they really expended does not appear, but if we may believe the Emperor Lewis, of Bavaria, the Popes took care to lose nothing by their labours. The activity of their mendicant salesmen of indulgences, amply replenished their coffers; and whether they spent any thing or not in preparations, the balance of the account stood pretty highly in their favour. All these abortive efforts discouraged not the twelfth Benedict from urging upon the French King, this pious and important undertaking; nor Philip from making vast preparations for visiting the Holy Land. But England threatened an invasion, which his absence might have rendered fatal to his kingdom, so he wisely deferred the crusade to a more favourable opportunity. AN. 1330.

AN. 1345. Still, though baffled, returning to the charge, the pontiff Clement V. unlocked the treasures of indulgences, that never-failing source of wealth and inducement: whereby the profligate might be happily accommodated, and enter paradise under the cross, without doing penance for, or parting with any of their crimes. An army assembled under Guy, the Dauphin, and proceeded for the scene of conquest, but not being able to procure provisions, or to live without food, they re-
turned

turned as they went, with their swords sheathed, and their indulgences in their pockets.

AN. 1363. One effort more closed these impotent attempts. John, King of France, instigated by the urgent exhortations, and won by the mighty promises of Urban V. prepared to measure lances with the Saracenic Knights under the walls of Jerusalem; but a greater conqueror, whom Christian and infidel are equally unable to resist, arrested him in his mid career, laid him low in the dust, and all his vast preparations vanished, as the mist of the morning. Thus ended the vain struggle, Mahomedism remained triumphant, and the cross yielded to the crescent. Though it must be owned with regard to the reality of the Christian life, it was as little to be found among the crusaders as among the Saracens themselves.

Happier and more considerable success is said to have attended the missionary efforts of the pontiffs in Tartary and China. The papal see, eager to improve every opportunity of extending its dominions, had dispatched Dominican and Franciscan ambassadors to meet the host of Tartars, which, advancing from the East, had over-run Hungary, Poland, and Silesia. This brought an embassy in return, and a new corps of black and white barefooted envoys

voys proceeded to the court of Kublai, AN. 1307. the Tartar monarch. JOHANNES A MONTE CORVINO, one of the most zealous of these missionaries, is said to have laboured with success, in bringing back many Nestorian Christians to the Roman pale, and spreading the gospel among the Tartars; for whose use he translated the New Testament into the Tartar language, a work indeed becoming a faithful missionary, and which could not fail to produce some happy effects. The reports which reached Europe were now so flattering, that the head missionary Corvino was raised to the archbishopric of Cambalu or Peking, the capital, and seven new Franciscan bishops dispatched to obey his orders, and second his efforts in the conversion of Tartars and Chinese. An intercourse being thus established with Rome, and permission given by the government of China, for the missionaries to labour in their vocation, the number of Latin churches is said to have been considerably encreased. I confess I have but a very low opinion of the Christianity then taught, if I may judge by other missionary specimens: and I hear with a great many grains of allowance, the reports of the missionaries themselves, who for the honour of holy church and their own, were not at all backward in enhancing the greatness of their labours, and vaunting the abundance of their successes. But whatever it was, the endurance of it was short,

short, and scarce a trace in all these vast regions hath ever since appeared of the Christian religion planted by them.

The arms of the Teutonic Knights in the North had nearly extirpated, by fire and sword, the last remains of paganism in Prussia and Livonia. One pagan monarch there still was, strong in the affections and valour of his people, Jagellon, Duke of Lithuania. But the vacant throne of AN. 1386. Poland, and the beautiful Hedwige, the daughter of the preceding sovereign, had charms irresistible. As neither the one or the other could be obtained without his submitting to baptism, and receiving the sign of the cross, he thought himself well paid for his complaisance, and bending the necks of his pagan subjects to the religion he had himself embraced, he united his dutchy with the crown of Poland, and received the fair princess for his bride. Thus all the northern people at last submitted to the profession of Christianity, and though in general they remained as much heathens as before, bishoprics were erected, and they learned to make the sign of the cross.

I am ashamed to mention the numerous conversions of that ill-fated people the Jews; whose wealth tempted the avarice of the monarchs, and whose persons and religion were so odious to the Roman

man pontiffs, and in general to the Christian world. They had spread wonderfully through every part of Europe, engrossed a great share of its traffic, and by their craft, their dexterity, and their usury, contrived to accumulate riches, that could not but excite the envy and appetite of their enemies. These began with blackening their character with every atrocity: children crucified and eat by them—the fountains poisoned—the consecrated wafers pierced, bleeding, and abused by their impious hands—charges as ridiculous as horrid, and impossible to be true; besides it was their interest and object to live in peace among the Christians, however abhorrent they might be of their superstitions. But where enmity was rooted, and credulity the easy dupe of the designing, it became no difficult matter to persuade Christian magistrates and prelates to persecute a detested race of people; and to exalt their zeal in conversions, whilst they gratified their covetousness by the plunder of these devoted victims: a terrible persecution therefore generally arose against them. Death in every shape of horror seized the obstinate, and those who saved their lives by baptism, neither saved their property, nor changed one of their sentiments. We may be always sure, “A RELIGION THAT PERSECUTES NEVER CAME FROM HEAVEN.” It must be said of every one who injures his fellow, “ye are of your father, the devil, and the works of your father ye do.”

Yet

Yet even these horrid executions produced the high commendations of the church of Rome, and merited indulgences equal to the zeal of crusaders.

The Saracenic kingdoms of Spain had not yet utterly submitted to the Christian yoke, but Valentia, Granada and Murcia, with Andalusia, only remained, and they trembled before the increasing superiority of the kings of Castile and Arragon. Their brethren of Fez and Morocco failed not in this extremity to hasten to their assistance, and often the scales of success vibrated, and it became dubious, whether the Christian or Mahomedan faith should prevail: but the courage of the Spanish Christians aided by their brethren, whom the Roman pontiff roused to their assistance, by the same promises of heaven, and indulgences, which were bestowed on those who conflicted in the Holy Land, turned the balance against the infidels; and more and more straitened every day, their fall and final expulsion approached with hasty strides. Yet these miserable wars wasted the finest country in Christendom, and thinned the ranks of population, to which other causes still supervening, many of the most beautiful and fruitful territories lie uncultivated, and almost without an inhabitant. War is always a fearful scourge, every thing which deserves the name of Christian abhors it.

But

But whatever Christianity gained in these partial conquests in the West, in the East it lost in a more abundant proportion. The Tartars become Mahometans under the mighty Tamerlane, deluged the eastern world with blood and devastation. Before him fell the Ottoman Emperor Bajazet ; and the Greek trembled on his throne, as the ravages of the Tartar horse approached the Bosphorus. But to the whole Christian name this terrible conqueror was peculiarly fatal ; not satisfied with subjugation and tribute, he resolved to compel his subjects to embrace the religion of their master. Death in its most tremendous forms rose up at the command of the bigot monarch, to terrify into apostacy the staggering and the feeble, or to exterminate the obstinate : whilst the mildest fate allotted to any Christian was slavery and exile. Thus few, very few remained, whether Greeks or Nestorians, through the vast extent of this newly erected empire, and all fell prostrate before the sword of Tamerlane, and the delusions of the impostor.

Nor did the promising appearances in China and the North of Asia long subsist. Before the end of the century a change of government in that vast country, completely excluded the possibility of a missionary's entrance ; and by a fundamental law of the new dynasty, no stranger might pass the
the

the frontier line, on penalty of death. Thus terminated the efforts, which had been made, in disappointment, and the final abolition of the Christian profession. At least no records authentic remain, of any subsisting churches, till the sixteenth century, though report suggests, that a small remnant of Nestorians was still concealed in the remoter provinces.

CHAP. II.

STATE OF THE INTERNAL CHURCH.

THE numerous schools, and universities established, promised an abundant harvest of literature. But the effects were not answerable to these expectations, as the preposterous methods of tuition, and the scholastic theology diverted the minds of the students from the primary objects of science, and the right means of attaining them, to subtleties, puerilities, and discussions, on subjects at once so intricate and useless, that the time and labour employed upon them, produced only a kind of more pompous ignorance.

Aristotle still maintained his empire in all the universities, and his word was held true as the gospel. A few of a mystical turn preferred the visions of Plato. The Aristotelians also were divided, and the sects of *Nominalists* and *Realists*, at no time battled it with greater fury than in the present age. The former, led on by the mighty warriors Occam, Buridan, and others; and stoutly resisted by the *realist* doctors of the Sorbonne, supported by the papal see, offended highly with the *spiritual* Franciscans,

eiscans, to whom Occam belonged, for their obstinate opposition to the edicts, respecting the ridiculous disputes which divided them. Condemned, prohibited by the University of Paris, and a pontifical sanction added to the decree, the *Nominalists* still refused to yield, and the persecution but enraged their zeal and increased their numbers; as is usually the case. AN. 1339.

The nobler sciences of geometry, astronomy, and the mathematics, though pursued with eagerness, were obscured by the passion for astrology, with which men of all ranks, learned and unlearned, high and low, were infected. To read the destinies of men in the stars, was the great book now studied; and notwithstanding the frequent accusations of magic and witchcraft, which brought the adventurous under the bloody tribunal AN. 1337: of the inquisition, and kindled the flames which consumed the physician Asculanus, others were not deterred by his fate from pursuing these absurd researches into futurity. The famous Raymund Lully escaped, whose works are yet extant, and have continued to seduce many in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, the universal elixir, and other wondrous inventions, which have exercised the folly and patience of the hermetical philosophy.

Yet

Yet geniuses of a superior order arose in the university of letters ; and Petrarch and Dante, in poetry and eloquence, might vie with the first of the Augustan age. Indeed, the progress of polite literature and philosophy, far exceeded the theological class, the productions of which scarce deserve to be mentioned ; and their manner of treating divine subjects was as abstruse and forbidding, as their matter was adulterated and unevangelical. All who read the Bible, and relished the simplicity of truth, were branded as heretics, and delivered over to their tormentors.

The Church of Rome was at its summit of arrogance and abuses ; and they formed a regular descent to the lowest of the sacerdotal tribe. The begging regiments of monks and friars fought manfully under its banners ; the kings of the earth seemed to have given their power unto the beast ; and the inquisitors, implacable as inhuman, watched over heretical pravity with the eyes of Argus, to keep down every spirit which breathed reform, and supposed the Church could possibly need it, either in its head or its members. Yet, under all these flattering appearances of triumphant dominion, secret causes were working to weaken, and finally dissolve the papal tyranny ; to which three things especially contributed.

AN. 1305. 1. The removal of the papal see to Avignon in France, and the schisms which prevailed in it. This loosened the bonds of spiritual obedience; whilst two, and sometimes three popes together, all claiming infallibility, and to be the sole head of the Church, distracted the fearful to decide to whom obedience was due, on pain of damnation, thundered out against their reciprocal partisans. This led many to think whether such claims were to be found in the Scriptures, or such obedience due to either of them. Nay, whether a visible head was at all essential to a Christian Church. The growing wants also of the popes, and their increasing rapaciousness, invented new modes of oppressing the Christian world, and added fresh cause of disgust and complaint. Some of their dominions being distant, and unproductive, through the tumults occasioned by their absence; and still less productive when the gains and plunder were to be divided between competitors, according to the several nations that were under their obedience; this led to the increase of all preceding abuses. The popes claimed the *first fruits* of all ecclesiastical benefices, according to one year's rated value. *Reservations, provisions, and expectatives*, put all ecclesiastical preferments into their disposal, a right they derived from *the plenitude of power* with which they pretended Christ had invested them—and of this they made the most scandalous

alous traffic, by their different legates throughout the Christian pale. But the never-failing source of indulgences was still pushed to a higher produce, by John XXII. who is said to have left in his treasury five-and-twenty millions of florins, of which eighteen millions were in specie, and the rest in plate and jewels, the plunder extorted from the nations under his obedience. Such exactions, and such claims, however they might be carried down for a time, could not but revolt many who dared examine the grounds of them, and leave in every nation a bitterness of disgust, at feeling themselves thus mercilessly drained to supply the pride, the vices, and the tyranny of French or Roman pontiffs.

2. A second cause of weakening the secret springs of the Roman government, was, the resistance made to the arrogant claims of Boniface, so openly avowed, and in a letter to Philip, king of France, so strongly enjoined; and afterwards by a bull solemnly promulgated—"That all power, *spiritual* "and *temporal*, was vested by Jesus Christ in the "Roman see." That every being of the human race, who dared disbelieve this fact, or withhold his obedience, was thereby constituted
AN. 1303. *an heretic, and damned to all eternity.*

Philip was not a man to submit to these

arrogant pretensions, and therefore wisely set himself to reduce within bounds these extravagant claims, which, in his answer to the Pope, he treated with becoming contempt: and, in an assembly of his peers, not only rejected all such insolent demands, but engaged them to concur with him in an accusation of heresy and simony against the Pope himself, drawn up by an intrepid lawyer, Nogaret, and demanding an œcumenical council to judge and depose him. The furious Boniface immediately launched all the thunders of the Vatican at his head. But as they needed only to be despised to be harmless, Philip, supported by his states, prepared to carry his purposes into effect, and sent Nogaret with orders to seize the refractory pontiff, and bring him bound to Lyons to be judged. As Philip had a strong party at Rome, his envoy seized the Pope at Anagni, where he expected no such visitant, and treating him with every indignity, so wounded the head which bore the tiara, with his gauntlet, that though the pontiff was rescued by the people, and carried to Rome, he died of the wounds he had received, or the fever brought on by rage and vexation. AN. 1303.

His successor over-awed, recalled the excommunication. But Philip continued with a high hand to demand the condemnation of Boniface, and the
suppres-

suppression of the KNIGHTS TEMPLARS, accused of heinous crimes; though their only real ones appear to have been their wealth, which Philip wanted, and their daring to espouse the cause of Boniface, whom he had resolved to punish. To effect this, on the next election, he secured the papal chair for a creature of his own, Clement V. whom he engaged to reside at Avignon, to be more under his immediate influence. To his pride and covetousness the Templars were sacrificed; and thus Clement V. compromised the saving the honour of the holy see, in order that Boniface might escape condemnation, on which, though dead, Philip strongly insisted.

It was of bad example to show, that the popes might be resisted with impunity. When therefore John XXII. presumed to interfere in imperial quarrels, to arrogate to himself to decide between rival candidates, and to dispose of the empire, as if it

had been a Roman fief, Lewis of BAVARIA. 1324. followed the steps of Philip, and

despising the papal edict which deposed him from his throne, and the excommunication which followed, dooming him to eternal perdition,

he, by his own authority, deposed John, AN. 1328. as unworthy the see, and placed in it

Nicholas the Fifth, from whom he received at Rome the imperial crown. After some time,

Nicholas submitted himself to John at Avignon. But the contest between the Pope and Emperor, to destroy each other, lasted till the death of the competitors, and each sat firm in his throne.

Lewis not only resisted himself, but taught others to resist. All who were persecuted by the Roman see and its inquisitors, fled to him for protection, and ranged themselves under his banners. Among these were the excellent Marsilius of Padua, who defended the Emperor with his pen; and many of the Beghards, Fratricelli, and others, called heretics, who, safe under imperial patronage, were taught by experience, that papal anathemas, which could not be enforced, were not to be feared.

3. The disputes among the Franciscans, in which the popes so often and fruitlessly interfered, served greatly to rouse a spirit of resistance to their authority.

A great contest was maintained through all this century, between the rigid and relaxed Franciscans, about the rules of their order. The rigid, called *spiritual*, would submit to no compromise, but would be *beggars absolute*, and destitute of all claim to any *right of use*, even to the rags they wore. The *mitigated rule*, admitted of the *use* without the *property*; and, that what they got by begging might be

be laid up in storehouses for a day of want. This was an inexpiable breach of the order in the eyes of *the spiritual*: and this ridiculous contest occasioned more trouble, vexation, disputes, and enmities, than all the essential doctrines of Christianity put together. Sometimes the popes favoured one of the parties; but wisely, in general, endeavoured to compromise the differences. The rigid could bear no abatement of the most austere rules of St. Francis, and determined they would be *beggars* in spite of all papal decisions. For this, at intervals, they were miserably persecuted, and four of the most zealous suffered in flames at Marseilles, whilst Delitiosi, their head, died in prison. These martyrs to their cause were adored by their brethren, and no decisions of popes or inquisitors could prevent the veneration in which they were held. AN. 1318.

“That neither Christ or his apostles possessed “any thing in common, or personally, by right of “property;” was asserted by one of the *spirituals*. This the Dominicans denied. The flame burst out with fresh violence. The popes sought to appease it. The very vitals of gospel truth were in danger. Silence was in vain enjoined upon the angry disputants; they would fight, in spite of their father. Thus Dominicans against Franciscans, and Franciscans against Dominicans; and to make confusion more confused, Franciscans against Franciscans,

waged irreconcilable war ; which the holy pontiffs, siding sometimes with the one, and sometimes with the other, could neither terminate nor allay.

The inquisition worked hard to destroy this refractory spirit : and after fountains of blood opened, these Franciscan beghards continued, though suppressed, uneradicated. To close these wounds, at last the popes consented to a division of the order, into those who persisted in the *severer rule* of discipline, and those who admitted a *mitigation* of it. The one bore the name of *conventual brethren*, the other, the *brethren of observation*. Yet, even to this, many refused to acquiesce ; and professed to prefer St. Francis before popes, and councils, his rule to the gospel, and his person, if not to a superiority, yet to an equality with Jesus Christ.

The fictions invented concerning St. Francis, and sanctioned even by the popes, are horrible. The Franciscans, to exalt their leader, determined to assimilate him to the Son of God ; and asserted he bore the five wounds of Christ, impressed upon him by the divine Master himself, that he might be admitted into the most complete resemblance of himself. And if we believe credible history, it is a fact, that such stigmas were found upon his body ; wounds inflicted no doubt by fanaticism, or craft, to render him a higher object of veneration to his disciples.

disciples. The Dominicans ridicule these pretensions ; the Franciscans hold them firmer than the articles of faith : and books of blasphemy upon blasphemy, have been produced by these zealous followers, to manifest the conformities of St. Francis with Jesus Christ. Albizi produced forty particulars, but a Spanish monk produced four thousand, tending to demonstrate the perfect equality of St. Francis, with the Saviour of mankind.

What the state of the world in every thing worthy the name of Christian must be, when these contests could so solemnly engross the nominal Church, may be easily conceived. Indeed, the corruption, by every account, was equal to the folly ; and the insolence of the Romish tyranny could only be exceeded by the despicable meanness with which it was generally borne.

CHAP. III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, HERESIES, DISPUTES, RITES, AND CEREMONIES.

THE papacy, wherever seated, or however torn with intestine divisions, maintained its proud claims of dominion over all persons, ecclesiastical or civil, assuming all powers in heaven and upon earth. But as this was disputed, a continual warfare was maintained by the princes, who asserted their independence, and by all who presumed to find fault with the tyranny of Rome. Her defenders, however, were strong and numerous. The *canonists*, who lived by the courts spiritual, were their learned advocates; the *monks* and *clergy* all decided satellites; the *inquisitors* their bloody executioners: whilst the reverence acquired by long prescription, and supported by the suggestion of its being due to Christ's immediate vicar upon earth, cast a glory around the pontiffs not easily tarnished. The preceding chapter will shew the height of their exaltation, and the causes that prepared the way for their abasement. Their very defenders were among the authors of their fall; for the scandalous lives of the monks and clergy were too

too visible not to be noticed ; and even the mendicant tribes of Dominicans and Franciscans, with all their poverty and obedience, were greatly belied, if the monkish cowl did not conceal the most scandalous immoralities and vices ; which some of the more disciplinarian popes endeavoured to remedy in vain. The *orders* had advanced themselves so high in the courts of princes and in their favour, were so dispersed through the world, and so united in the defence of their privileges, that the popes were compelled to respect the beggars they had made ; and superstition had attached such sanctity to their habit, that multitudes in their dying hours purchased admission into their order, or remembered them liberally in their wills, that they might at least be buried in the mendicant's rags, and so bear some relation to the fraternity, in hopes at the day of judgment to stand a better chance in these beggars' weeds. Yet the universal spread of these orders, the protection of the pontiffs, their advancement to the highest distinctions, their assumption of the first places in the university chairs, and above all, the diminution of power and wealth occasioned by their privileges, to the prelates and secular clergy, made them hated, though feared ; and stirred up many to dispute their rights, and to be jealous of their influence. The universities of Oxford and Paris resisted their claims ; and though the monks were vigorously supported by their pontifical

pontifical masters, many set themselves to write against their abuses, and some even to deny the papal authority, to grant such privileges. John de Polliac in France, Richard Archbishop of Armagh, and others, resisted; but in vain. The monks triumphed at the court of Rome, over all their adversaries. AN. 1320—1356.

AN. 1360. The famous Wickliff particularly distinguished himself in this controversy; and seconded the Archbishop in his opposition to the encroachments of these insolent beggars, on the privileges and statutes of his university at Oxford; and through the sides of their companions, the popes, and Roman see itself, received many hard blows from this intrepid Englishman; for which the Archbishop of Canterbury, Langham, a creature of the papacy, deprived him of the wardenship of Canterbury Hall, now Christ's Church, and put a monk in his place; which decision, the Pope, on appeal, confirmed. For they who appeal from ecclesiastic to ecclesiastic, can hope for little justice. Naturally incensed at this oppression, as well as zealous for the honour of his university, Wickliff spared not the tyranny of Rome, or the abuses of that government; whilst he treated all the monkish order with equal severity and contempt. He exhorted all men to read the Scriptures for themselves; and resolved to procure them that opportunity,

portunity, by translating the Bible into his native tongue, and dispersing copies as widely as possible. A crime of this enormity could not escape episcopal cognizance ; and on the accusation of these monks, *Sudbury*, Archbishop of Canterbury, summoned the heretic before a council at

AN. 1377. London ; where nothing could have

prevented his condemnation, but the favour of John a Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and other noblemen, who honoured the reformer, and protected him from violence. The great schism

of the popedom just then happening, the accusation slept, and Wickliff held his rectory of Lutterworth, and disseminated, far and wide, with the Scriptures, the principles of truth and of the reformation. A succeeding Archbishop,

AN. 1385. *Courteney*, at the instigation of the monks, revived the process ; and though

Wickliff's person yet escaped the flames, his books and opinions did not ; being judged in two councils held at London and Oxford, heretical and erroneous. How he avoided the effects of their malice, is uncertain ; whether by humiliations, or through the same powerful protection which he had before experienced. He retired,

AN. 1387. however, to his benefice in the country, and shortly after finished his glorious career ; leaving behind him the seeds which

were

were to bring forth fruits of eternal life to millions yet unborn. His followers were not as happy as their leader, many of them, under the denomination of *Lollards* and *Wickliffites*, were hunted out by the bishops and their inquisitors, and proceeded against with all the unrelenting cruelty of their courts ecclesiastical. The vengeance which Wickliff's living person escaped, fell upon his dead bones, which, in consequence of a decree of the council of Constance, were afterwards dug up, and publicly burnt.

The *Lollards*, who now became marked as an heretical sect, and afforded a general name for odium and persecution, were originally from Flanders. The clergy and monks not chusing to attend the sick and dying in pestilential disorders, or to procure burial for their corpses, a set of brethren and sisters, who chose St. Alexius for their patron, associated for these humane offices; and received the name of *Cellites*, from the cells to which they retired; and of *Lollards*, from the dirges sung at these funerals. Their psalmody attracted many, and associations of a like kind were formed in Hainault, Brabant, and many parts of Germany, where these persons were in nothing more distinguished than by *their singing*: Their name being derived from the High Dutch word, *lullen*, singing
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in a plaintive tone of voice, as the *beghards* had received theirs from the word *beggen*, or praying earnestly. And these names and sects began to be confounded together, as probably the same persons were as observable from the hymns they sung, as the earnestness of the prayers which they offered. As the term *Beghard*, so the name *Lollard* was imputed indiscriminately to all who fell under heretical suspicion, whether, like Wickliff, they were men of true zeal and Christian piety, or belonged to the multitude of reformers of every kind, who sprung up, bearing testimony against papal abuses; though, as their enemies affirmed, cloaking the greatest crimes, and most heretical opinions under the profession of sanctity. Their profession, indeed, was evident; but the crimes in general charged upon them, probably their glory. Many of these, especially when they lost their great support in Lewis of Bavaria, the Emperor, who had protected them from papal persecution, fell into the hands of the inquisitors: and others, to save themselves from prison and death, dispersed and fled, wherever they could be hid, or find protection. Bohemia received many of the fugitives, where they joined the discontented with the papal usurpations, formed the party after called Hussites, and became the first fruits or revivers of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren.

The

The subtleties of Aristotle, and the schools also increased the number of heretics, and made work for the inquisitors, whilst the deep philosophical disputants were ready to start questions, and broach opinions impious and heretical, for which some were burnt, and others prudently retracted.

AN. 1387. The Dominicans particularly brought upon themselves the indignation of the University of Paris, for disputing *the immaculate conception of the Virgin*: and Montefonus, their champion, was excommunicated by the Pope, to the great triumph of the Franciscans. The famous Duns Scotus, the Franciscan, assailed the Dominican Doctor, Aquinas, and the body of each order ranged themselves on the side of their equally subtle and absurd gladiatorial leaders. *The immaculate conception of Mary* prevailed.

A more important controversy was maintained by the same doughty champions, *Scotists* against *Thomists*, on the long disputed articles of the *freedom of the human will*, the *nature*, and *measure of divine grace*, the *eternal purposes of God*, and the means of accomplishing them; with other curious questions on *bodily identity*: both claimed the Church and her authority, and had it. But as contradictions cannot be true, and, both sides were
admitted

admitted to be good Catholics, and found in the faith, this was compelled to be a drawn battle, and each continued to hold their own opinions.

The unhappy schism between the Greek and Latin churches could not be healed. For, however in the hour of distress, the Grecian emperors and patriarchs were disposed to secure the Roman assistance by concessions, the clergy and people revolted at the idea; and in the end, the dispute was as bitter as at the beginning.

I cannot dwell on the new sect of mystics, the illuminés of that day, who could see the divine glory by long fixing their eyes on their navels: nor whether this was "a portion of the eternal light in which God dwells," and whether "this light is distinct from the divine essence," and "the same that appeared on Mount Tabor;" and whether there be a difference between "the essence of God and his attributes." The prelate, Palamas, and the monk, Barlaam, shall be at liberty respecting these things, to anathematise each other.

AN. 1348. A more awful scene presents itself in the execution of the various denominations of heretics, by the inquisitors of Christ's vicar upon

earth. They were hunted out in every part of Christendom, and under the names of Beghards, Lollards, Wickliffites, Waldenses, Cathari, Apostolics, and Brethren of the free Spirit, compelled to abjure, or perish: confuted by the keen disputant, Duns Scotus, but more powerfully pressed by the arguments of tortures, racks, gibbets, fire, and chains. Being comprised under the general name of heretics, it will be difficult to separate innocence from guilt, error from falsehood, and the fanatic and immoral, from the follower of the Scriptures, and the godly in Christ Jesus: as in truth these were equally criminal in the eyes of their persecutors, wherever they stood connected with that greatest of all crimes, rejection of the tyranny, and complaint of the abuses of the Church of Rome.

The Whippers also renewed their flagellations, to which they annexed the most meritorious virtues, as equal to baptism, and superseding the necessity of the blood of Christ; and their processions occasioned no small disturbances. The anathemas of Clement, and the fires of inquisitors, strove to extirpate these wandering fanatics in vain.

AN. 1373. A more joyous sect in Liege and Flanders, exercised the judges of heretical pravity.
These

These were *the Jumpers*, who assembled of both sexes, and holding hand in hand, displayed the most extraordinary gestures; till exhausted with the violence of their continued motions, they fell breathless to the ground, pretending at these seasons to receive visions and revelations. The ignorant clergy regarded them as demoniacs, and by incense and exorcisms, endeavoured to cast out the dancing devils from the deluded fraternity. The French Convulsionists, and the Welch Jumpers, have had predecessors of the same stamp. There is nothing new under the sun. Yet knavery and folly are more tolerable than cruelty. At the one we can smile, at the other we shudder.

AN. 1350. Clement the Sixth, not willing to wait a hundred years, and having discovered that the jubilee among the Jews was observed every half century, seized the plausible pretext to gratify the devotion of pilgrims, and profit by their credulity. His successors improved upon the hint, and shortened yet the term to five-and-twenty years. There wanted no pretext; the advantage of the case superseded all other reasons.

To make plenty of holidays, Innocent V. added to their number, the festival of *the lance*, of *the nails*, and of *the crown of thorns*, with their appropriate

priate forms and ceremonies; and, horrible to relate, the festival of *the five wounds*, made so sacred by the stigmas impressed on St. Francis, to please the Franciscans, was added to the calendar. Whilst the heretic John XXII. enjoined Gabriel's salutation of Mary, to be added to every Christian's daily prayers. Nothing was too gross or absurd for the folly, ignorance, and superstition of the age.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

IT is reviving, amidst the dark and dreary scenes through which we must toil, to see a beam of light darting across the dismal gloom ; and promising a rising sun to dispel the clouds of ignorance and error.

Wickliff stands among the foremost, whose labours tended to enlighten the sphere in which he moved, and to unbar the gates of truth, which had been shut by the seclusion of the oracles of God from the sight of the people.

The spreading sects of Lollards, and their fellows, into whatever mistakes the spirit of the times might lead them, all united in examining the iniquitous claims of Rome ; in discovering the delusions of the superstitions by which they had been enslaved ; the priest-craft by which they had been plundered ; and the unchristian cruelty of their ecclesiastical persecutors. To such superiors they might well refuse obedience, and plead for that hated word, REFORM. All attempts to quench the

rising flame, though succeeding in one spot, only drove the persecuted to another, where it broke out afresh, and continued to spread in spite of all attempts to extinguish it. The Waldenses and Albigenses, increased in the South of France and Switzerland. The Beghards and Lollards wandered through Flanders and Germany. Bohemia received the persecuted refugees, and adopted them and their sentiments. The faithful were, indeed, comparatively few, and found generally in the lowest ranks of life, especially among the weavers of Antwerp and the Netherlands. Some, who bore the names of heretical infamy, probably deserved reproach; but there was a chosen generation, a remnant, according to the election of grace, whom all the waters of error could not quench, nor the floods of persecution drown.

The University of Oxford had the honour of producing the first eminent English reformer, and the crime of persecuting and expelling him. The Dominicans and Franciscans, who then bore rule, could neither endure the light of the scripture truth, nor the purity of scripture conduct; but, *evulso uno non deficit alter*; others arose to maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, and to spread the translations of the oracles of God.

What

What real religion remained in the East, among the Greeks or Nestorians, it is difficult to ascertain. Yet I cannot but hope, from past experience, that the persecutions which thinned their ranks, would purify their spirits; and, that those who dared to suffer the loss of all things, and death itself, for Jesus Christ and his name, were living members of his body mystical. In the West, the numbers greatly increased of those who emancipated themselves from the yoke of bondage; and whatever abuses might attend the liberty they claimed, a people arose to be to the praise of the glory of God's grace, resolute to suffer any torments, rather than submit to idolatry and superstition; and zealous to spread through the Christian world the necessity of consulting the oracles of God; renouncing all dominion of men over their faith, that they might become followers of God as dear children. It is pleasingly observable, how all true spiritual religion appears in every age under the same form. The names with which these non-conformists to an evil world are branded, may be different; but a name of reproach and odium they ever have had, and ever will have, whilst men hate the light, nor come unto the light. The things which affixed these stigmas upon them, were *singing hymns and psalms, praying with great devotion, and a love and diligent reading of the word of God.*

May every age produce an increasing multitude of such Beghards, Lollards, and Wickliffites !

Yet these were in general so few comparatively, and so inferior, in all that the world calls good and great, that they gave no very alarming apprehensions to their lordly masters. Power, wealth, wisdom, and multitudes were leagued against them; and it is matter of astonishment, how the burning bush continued unconsumed amidst the flames.

CENTURY XV.

CHAP. I.

EXTERNAL STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

THE last poor remains of the Grecian empire were now ready to fall under the Mahomedan yoke : wasted with incessant war and harassed by these conquerors, the Christians through Asia were compelled to bow their necks to their dominion, and many to adopt their religion. Reduced to little more than the city of Constantinople, in vain they invoked the help of the western world. The Pope, more anxious to reduce them to spiritual subjection than to enable them to maintain their liberties, deceived them with promises of assistance, in order to engage their submission, which he was either unwilling or unable to afford them. The dreadful hour arrived, and Constantinople fell : the terror of it alarmed the western world, yet could not unite the Christian princes in any common bond to oppose a torrent, that threatened quickly to deluge the West, as it had done the East. AN. 1453.

The regions of Tartary, and the adjacent provinces, with the vast empire of China, returned

again to Cimmerian darkness. The light which had been once kindled, appeared nearly, if not utterly extinct; and if any remained professing the Christian name, they were obliged to use the greatest precautions to conceal themselves from observation.

Nor did the conquests over the Saracens in Spain, or the envenomed persecution of the Jews increase much the number of Christians. The Mahomedans obstinately adhered to their false prophet, and no temptation, nor terror could induce them to submit to the papal missionaries. Indeed their teaching and cruelties were alike unsuited to produce conviction on minds ulcerated with ill-usage, and the final expulsion of them from their country, by the famous archbishop of Toledo, was a step as impolitic, as savage. The Jews also resisted and suffered: compelled to abjure Moses, many dissembled and submitted; but retained judaism as tenaciously as ever, with the most implacable abhorrence of their persecutors. To this day they remain in Spain and Portugal, bowing the knee to the cross through terror of the inquisition, and secretly cursing him who bore it.

The discovery of a new world opened a noble entrance for gospel truth, had the missionaries been as evangelical as the mariners were adventurous:

ous : but Christianity shudders at the recital of Spanish cruelties, and Portuguese conquests. The thirst for gold seems to have extinguished every sensibility of the human heart. To compel the tortured to discover their wealth, and to submit to baptism for the salvation of their souls, displays an atrocity of character that must forever be execrated : we turn from the scenes recorded with shame and indignation : such Christianity could only be the religion of devils incarnate. As the reward for this discovery, and the encouragement to christianize the heathen nations, the imperial pontiff divided a world, the very geography of which he did not understand, between Spain and Portugal ; and legalized the conquests they should make by a solemn gift of all the countries they should discover on each side of the line of demarcation ; as if the undisputed title of the universe had vested in himself. Thus Africa, India, and the afflicted America received the first sounds of the name of Christ through a medium that must have excited their terror and abhorrence, instead of winning the first affections of the heart. Such Christians can hardly be said to have enlarged the pale of the Church : they were indeed made slaves to Rome, but continued strangers to that gospel liberty with which Christ has made us free ; and to every real blessing of vital Christianity.

CHAP. II.

ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH INTERNALLY.

AMIDST the reign of abuses and superstitions of every kind, the state of religion must be grievously debased and depraved, as we behold it. Vice triumphed in *indulgences*, and they who had power to absolve each other were far from being disposed to inflict severities, from the consciousness of what themselves deserved. All crimes were venial but heresy. A name of most extensive import, and comprising all who doubted the dogmas, or resisted the dominion of the Roman pontiffs: these the legions of inquisitors pursued with fire and sword; and if they could not utterly extirpate them, they endeavoured to thin their ranks whenever they fell into their clutches, by merciless executions.

The extinction of the sciences with the eastern empire, drove a multitude of men of letters from Constantinople to Italy, who, under the patronage of the famed Medici family especially, served to revive the drooping cause of literature, and produced a considerable change in the sentiments of the students. For as the Greeks chiefly preferred
Plato

Plato to Aristotle, and were advanced to the professor's chair in every city and university, they introduced his philosophy, and abated much of the servile obedience, which had been paid to the Stagyrice; whose opinions and subtleties also often led to dangerous errors, and atheistical or rather pantheistical principles.

The Greek and Latin authors were now brought forth from obscurity, and ably explained; to which the discovery of the art of printing especially contributed; first invented by COSTER, OF AN. 1430. HAERLEM, and gradually brought to perfection by Guttemberg and Scoeffer: a wondrous invention; and to which under God the revival of religion was still more indebted than to any other cause whatever. Learning of every kind now made a vast progress: the oriental languages were studied; antiquities explored; the muses cultivated; and all the branches of polite literature pursued, with encreasing success and eagerness. But as this comes not into my plan, except as the Church is affected, I shall only observe that the rising sect of platonists, zealous for the honour of their divine master as he was called, debated sharply with the Aristotelians, on the superior excellence of their opinions; challenging enquiry which of their two systems of philosophy most corresponded with, and had the most favourable influence

fluence on Christianity. It must be owned that all philosophic mixtures are very unsuitable with the simplicity of gospel truth ; but the reveries and mysticism of the platonic school were certainly less impious and erroneous, than the atheistical tendency of the Aristotelian philosophy ; yet this continued to be the ruling doctrine in the schools, and gratifying to the subtle disputants, who sought reputation from the niceties of definitions, and sophistical intricacies of metaphysical ideas. These Aristotelians also continued with the same or rather increasing violence their contentions among themselves, as *Nominalists* and *Realists* : adding to arguments, invectives ; and enforcing both, by battles and bloodshed : such controversies could not but be highly unfriendly to the spirit of truth. Indeed very little that was worth contending for remained, so great was the departure in principle and practice, and such jealousy was expressed at every idea of reformation, as if he who presumed to touch the grossest of sacerdotal abuses, touched the apple of the Church's eye. Yet some daring spirits would not keep silence : and pleaded boldly the cause of Christ against his betrayers, charging the pride, avarice, and enormities of Rome and her clergy, as the sin of Sodom, and ready to bring down the Divine vengeance on the head and the members. Meantime the offensive schism of the papacy increased. The attempts to heal it by the deposition
of

of the *two* contending pontiffs, and the election of *one* head in their room, added only a *third* to the number; each maintained his sole sovereignty, and condemned his antagonists, and all their adherents, to the flames of hell forever and ever. The scandal this occasioned, added to the furious progress of what was called heresy, amidst these confusions, roused the spirit of the Emperor, the Kings of France and England, and other princes, to attempt cleansing the Augean stable of the abuses which had become intolerable; and healing the divisions which distracted the consciences of the simple and the scrupulous; dubious to which visible head obedience was due, yet too enslaved by superstition, habit, and the clergy, to cast them altogether off, and settle in their several kingdoms their own ecclesiastical government. Nothing appeared so effectual for these purposes as a general council; it was accordingly summoned at the instigation of Sigismund, by the Pope last chosen, John XXIII. He opened himself this assembly, at Constance, in the presence of the Emperor, an immensity of bishops and princes, or ambassadors from all the states professing in the West the Christian name.

AN. 1414. As, among the first acts of this assembly, the Roman pontiff was decreed subject to a general council, they proceeded to depose John
XXIII.

XXIII. for his crimes. Gregory XII. sent in his resignation to prevent his deposition; and Benedict XIII. refractory, and refusing to submit, was solemnly cast down from his eminence and degraded. A fourth Pope was chosen at the council, Martin V. The vanquished popes struggled for a while, and at last quitted the field to the sole Martin: but when this first object was secured, the more difficult task still remained, the reformation of abuses in the Pope himself and his clergy, the continuance of which the members of the council, with this pope at their head, were too interested not to maintain; nor could endure the idea of consenting to any material suppression of claims, which must abridge their wealth and power, and subject their crimes to the cognizance of the civil governors. The crafty Martin, therefore, notwithstanding the hopes he had raised before his election, contrived to elude every effort of reformation, which Gerson and many other bold speakers earnestly pressed, and which was generally allowed to be necessary: but the difficulty where to begin, what to amend, where to stop, and how to prevent the heretics from taking occasion of triumph from the confession of abuses, engaged the Pope to dissolve this assembly, after three years and a half sitting and doing nothing of importance, and to defer the work of reform to another council, to be shortly after held for this salutary purpose. AN. 1418.

However

However they took care not to part without making some severe examples of heretical punishment. In this they were cordially united, to suppress the dreaded progress of the word of God, and the impudent boldness of those who reproached the clergy by their lives, and upbraided them with their ignorance, avarice and vices.

John Hufs and Jerome of Prague, men of the most exemplary piety, highly eminent in Bohemia, and distinguished members in the university of that city, had made themselves bitter enemies among the clergy by the sharpness of their rebukes, and the fidelity of their remonstrances. Hufs had especially envenomed the see of Rome by his efforts to withdraw the university of Prague from the papal jurisdiction of Gregory XII. as he had offended the Germans, by maintaining the rights of the Bohemians against the other principalities, as having an equality of power with the Bavarians, Poles, and Saxons, who each claimed a separate and equal vote, contrary to the original establishment of the university. This dispute had been sharply maintained, and occasioned a vast secession of professors and students to Leipsic, where they erected an university of their own in opposition to Hufs, and the Bohemians; but a still greater number of enemies he had made, with the famed Gerson at their head, for his strong measures in the university of

Prague, in support of the *Realists*, to which party he belonged, against the *Nominalists*, whose chief in the university of Paris, Gerson was.

All these co-operating causes had raised such a flame, as rendered it dangerous for Hus and Jerome to venture among this envenomed host of enemies; nor dared they to trust themselves, till fortified with the most solemn safe conduct from the Emperor for their journey thither, and peaceable return. But the clergy by their intrigues, and the bribes distributed among the fathers and courtiers of Sigismund, contrived to have these revered reformers accused and imprisoned, and after forty days disputation, condemned to the flames, in opposition to the most sacred engagements. Hus was the first victim, and Jerome followed. The clergy had now the opportunity of vengeance, and they resolved not to lose it: a thousand crimes were charged upon these holy men of heretical pravity; the real ones for which they suffered, were the offence given to the Pope and clergy, by their free and vehement censures of their avarice, superstitions and tyranny; and the fearful effects produced by their preaching, in alienating the minds of multitudes from the Church of Rome, and circulating the works and opinions of the great English heretic Wickliff, to the danger of the entire subversion of the very foundation of the Roman catholic faith and dominion.

Nothing short of flames could expiate such enormous crimes. The noble martyrs braved all their insults and torments. Hufs observed, "that they were burning a goose, (for so his name in German signifies) but that God would from his ashes raise up a swan, whose singing should affright these vultures." The application to Luther was evident. Jerome was at first staggered, and induced to make some concessions, but recovering his fortitude, appeared before his persecutors, as Poggius owns, with the face of an angel, and a wisdom and eloquence that none of his adversaries could gainsay or resist; but his condemnation was decided, and the goodness of his cause but hastened his execution. Hufs was burned July 15, 1415—Jerome burned May 30, 1416.

These men were disciples of the English reformer Wickliff, espoused his sentiments, and circulated his works with the greatest diligence; and this was the grand argument for their destruction. The council would gladly have executed the same vengeance on the principal author of heresy; but he had rested from his labours in the grave. His bones therefore were the only remains on which they could glut their impotent revenge; these were ordered to be dug up and burnt, and the ashes thrown into the Avon.

The administration of the sacrament to the laity in the bread only, was one of the wise decrees of this council.

The Pope would gladly have had no more to do with councils if he could have avoided it ; but the clamours for the promised reformation, and the flame which the execution of Hufs and Jerome had occasioned, to the great increase of such heretics, compelled the reluctant pontiff to summon a new council at Pavia, from whence it was ultimately removed to Basil, or Basle, in AN. 1451. Switzerland. But Eugenius, the successor of Martin, alarmed at the vigorous steps with which the council opened, and the claims of superiority made by the fathers ; used all his artifices to suspend its operations. The council resolutely proceeded to abolish some of the papal impositions, *annates*, *expectatives*, *reservations* and *provisions*. This exasperated the pontiff beyond all endurance—a quarrel ensued. The fathers of the council summoned the Pope before them ; he presumed to dissolve them, and announce a new council to be held at Ferrara. Ecclesiastical thunders now roared afresh : the council deposed the Pope, and the Pope anathematised the council. Another Pope was chosen, a new schism divided the papal world. These

These shameful and absurd quarrels, merely about pride and power, mark the deplorable state of Christianity.

The schism being once more healed by abdication, the papal claims rose as high as ever; and Pius II. advanced to the pontifical chair, retracted solemnly all that he had said and written, as Æneas Sylvius: than whom in the council of Basle, there had not been a more zealous partisan for the superiority of councils, and the necessity of reform. But the tiara no sooner encircled his brow, than his eyes were opened to see and lament the heresies of the simple prelate, and to display the zeal and orthodoxy of the sovereign pontiff.

The loss of Constantinople, and the progress of the Turks, made the Popes tremble on their throne, and they strove to rouse the slumbering zeal of the princes of their communion in vain. As vain was the attempt to reconcile the divided churches: for though Bessarion, made a cardinal, and others were gained to the Latin church, the sturdy body of the Greek prelates disdained obedience to the Roman see; submitted rather to the Mahomedan government; and maintained their church's independence.

AN. 1492. BORGIA, the last who filled the papal chair in this century, was a monster of cruelty and impiety; sticking at nothing to enrich his bastard family, and supporting them in all their atrocities. If the Church was corrupted and debased under other pontiffs, under him it became the abomination of desolation.

The monkish orders were sunk into the dregs of idleness and licentiousness. The different mendicant tribes abusing the credulity of the vulgar, were only intent upon exalting their own order, and the papal supremacy: and all ranks of men, overwhelmed with ignorance and superstition, blindly followed their blind leaders.

The persecution of heretics raged; and was the most unequivocal proof of religion: to kill all who resisted the Romish hierarchy, was among the most meritorious of services. Thus princes readily aided the inquisitors, and merited titles of distinction from the sovereign pontiffs. New orders still arose; but heretics multiplied in spite of all the sufferings they endured, and the fresh army of disputants whom they had to encounter. Indeed it must be confessed the weapons of argument would have been very feeble and ineffectual, if they had not been seconded by the more powerful syllogisms of fire
and

and imprisonment. The learned and ancient John de Wessalia thus perished in confinement; whilst the more vehement Jerome Savanarola kindled a flame by his testimony against the prevailing abuses, which all his piety, learning, and eloquence could not quench; and his body consumed in the fire could only expiate his offences.

These bloody orgies, now universally practised, added a deeper gloom of horror to the prevailing superstitions. Yet the truth had taken so deep an hold on the consciences of many; and Wickliff's works had been disseminated with such zeal, and read with such avidity, that though the inquisitors fought them with eagerness, and the archbishop of Prague at one time burnt no less than two hundred volumes, neither the fear of the inquisitors, nor any other consideration, deterred his followers from propagating his books and his doctrines, which as drawn immediately from the Scriptures of truth, could not but correspond in substance with those which have been since received and established in all the Churches of the reformed.

AN. 1420. The Bohemians submitted not passively to the butchery of their apostolic chiefs, resolved to have teachers of their faith, who were like their martyred Huss and Jerome, and to enjoy the ordinance of the Lord's Supper according to its primi-

tive institution. Many of them retired to a steep mountain, which they called Tabor, and in despite of popes and councils, communicated together both in bread and wine. Their church increasing by fresh accessions; under the famous Ziska, blind, but wise as intrepid, they defied their enemies, and asserted their liberty to worship God according to their consciences. A bloody war was raised against them, and after dreadful carnage on both sides, they maintained their ground against all their enemies. Unhappily they divided among themselves into two parties; and the crafty Sylvius contrived to detach the Calixtines from the Taborites, by granting them the use of the cup in the communion. The Calixtines indeed were very moderate in their demands, whilst the others insisted upon entire reform of the subsisting abuses; the demolition of the sacerdotal tyranny; and the reduction of the ecclesiastical order to its primitive simplicity. Jacobellus, an affectionate disciple of Hufs, was at the head of the Calixtines: Martin Loquis, a Moravian, eminent among the Taborites. Some mistakes and abuses among them, time and experience corrected. These last began to bear the name of *Bohemian brethren*. They were numbered among the Beghards; and united with Luther and his associates at the reformation. I apprehend the Moravian brethren in Germany and England, are a scion from this stock, and if the ancients at all resembled

resembled the moderns, they were the excellent of the earth.

The *schoolmen* and commentators produced nothing worth remembering. Their jargon tended rather to confound the understanding than to convey information : a kind of literary inanity. The *mystic divines*, with some mixture of fancy and allegory, spoke a language much more intelligible, and which reached the conscience. The well-known book attributed to Thomas a Kempis, received high commendations from Luther, and deservedly, though whether he, or one Gersen, a Frenchman, were the real author, hath been matter of dispute.

Hufs, and Savanarola, have left works that speak the hearts of the writers ; but they have been succeeded by men so much advanced in spiritual wisdom and knowledge, that little attention hath been paid to them, or indeed to any of the writers before Luther. The Church in general continued in great spiritual darkness ; sunk in superstition ; the people, dupes of sacerdotal jugglers ; ready to receive the despotic mandates of popes ; and to believe all the absurdities of fraud, and lying miracles, inculcated by priestly craft. And of all crimes, the most dangerous, was the attempt to emancipate the souls of men from this yoke of bondage.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH, HERESIES,
SCHISMS, RITES, AND CEREMONIES.

THE government of the Church was generally now admitted to be under one visible head. And the Roman pontiff made it his undeviating design to subject to the holy see, all persons, civil as well as ecclesiastical, endeavouring to inculcate this maxim, that all lawful power upon earth was derived from Christ, through his vicegerent, the head of the Romish Church. But as we have seen, to this the temporal sovereigns greatly demurred, and the prelatical order was much disposed to raise a barrier against despotism, by exalting a general council, above the Pope, as well as all others. This was a sharp bone of contention, and is not yet settled in the popish creed. But it was generally admitted, as one of the heresies to be punished with fire, that the Church of Christ could subsist, (as many then zealously maintained) without a visible head at all; sufficiently established under the spiritual and invisible guidance of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. These revolvers from the jurisdiction of Rome, were pursued by

by all the arms of sophistry, and the schools; the zeal of the mendicants, and the whole body of the clergy; supported by the secular arm of the princes, and the malignity and craft of inquisitors. Yet their numbers were not diminished by their sufferings. They continued to spread through every part of Christendom; and nothing contributed more to this, than the obstinate determination of all the ecclesiastics in power to maintain inviolably their claims, as if they were all of divine authority; and the more contrary they were to every holy and heavenly disposition, and the more they favoured their tyranny and their covetousness, the more tenacious they were of them. Nay, where the abuse was even incapable of vindication, it was still to be maintained, lest the heretics should triumph. Thus the matter became desperate, and drove necessarily to the great revolt, which was preparing.

The Greeks and Latins contended fierce as ever. The attempts to subjugate the one to the other, awakened jealousy, and envenomed resentment. The East laid all its miseries to the insensibility of their brethren, in not flying to their assistance; and complained that, whilst the Roman pontiffs were grasping at supremacy, Constantinople was lost.

The

The Franciscans and Dominicans still viewed each other with the eye of rivals. And whether *the blood of Christ, shed on the cross, was a part of his divine nature, and to be worshipped*, occasioned a new and bitter controversy, which the Pope found it so difficult to decide, that he could only enjoin silence on the noisy disputants, and bid them wait his infallible decision on the subject, which was never intended to be given.

The multitude of heretics afforded abundant labour for the inquisitors. The *Fratricelli*, a branch of the sect of *spiritual Franciscans*, gave them much employment. The *Waldenses*, through many European provinces, were carefully hunted up, and punished, and suppressed, wherever their meetings were discovered. *The Brethren of the free Spirit* wandered about Germany, and many things are reported of them impure, and highly fanatical; whether true or false, it is hard to determine. *The White Brethren*, so called from their dress, paraded with a cross at their head. The leader of this sect is said to have been a Scotchman, probably one of the Wickliffites; and they went in procession from city to city in immense multitudes, praying and singing, and were received with much reverence and hospitality. In Italy, the Pope contrived to seize their head, who was brought to Rome, and
burnt

burnt as a heretic, and those who followed him dispersed. In various places, especially AN. 1411. at Brussels, similar associations were formed, by those who called themselves *men of understanding*. Whatever were their errors, we are sure the part most exceptionable to the inquisitors, will have our approbation, rather than censure, viz. "That Christ alone merited eternal life for us, by his obedience to death, even the death of the cross, and not man by his own doings or duties." "That Christ alone can absolve a sinner, and not the priest." And, "that penance could never procure salvation."

The Flagellantes, or *Whippers*, also continued to disturb the peace, and provoke inquisitorial animadversion; and not a few of them were cast into the fire. Such inhumanity was called zeal for the Church: and to delay accusing or punishing heretics, brought a suspicion of orthodoxy.

The Church, loaded with ceremonies, needed the pruning hook; but every Pope exercised his invention to add something to the number, in order to distinguish his pontificate. The AN. 1456. *transfiguration*—the grant of indulgences, for observing the *festival of the immaculate*

AN. 1476. *immaculate conception*—with a number of new forms of prayers in honour of that good woman, already sufficiently bedizened, enlarged the popish ritual. Indeed, the whole of religious worship was become a solemn mockery of trifling postures, vain repetitions, and a pageantry of dress, and ceremony.

CHAP. IV.

ON THE TRUE SPIRITUAL CHURCH OF CHRIST.

AS we advance nearer to the dawn of the Reformation, the abuses so atrocious of the false Church, begin to force themselves more and more on observation. And though they were more easily discovered than amended, yet the evidence of their subsistence, and the means employed to suppress complaint, though it smothered the fire of discontent, only prepared for a more terrible explosion. The flames with which the pretended heretics were encircled, cast a luminous glory around the dying martyrs, and rendered their words and examples more deeply impressed on those who beheld their faith and patience, and shuddered with horror at their bloody executioners, and the clergy, the instigators of the AN. 1416. persecution. The good Lord Cobham, a chief among the Wickliffites, was hanged and burnt without Temple Bar, having been delivered over to the secular arm. His sufferings contributed to quicken the zeal of the timid, and to rouse to imitation of such exalted virtue. In England, repeated acts of parliament respecting

respecting the followers of Wickliff; the councils of archbishops and bishops, in censuring his tenets, and those that maintained them, demonstrated the number of those who openly embraced and defended them; and the immensity of tracts disseminated by Wickliff, as well as the translation of the Scriptures, which the art of printing tended more easily to multiply, notwithstanding all the copies that were burnt by the inquisitors, spread mightily the truth as it is in Jesus, and opened up the sores of the leprous Church, which stunk, and were corrupt, through the foolishness, luxury, pride, and avarice, of the head and the members. Many of the great men in England highly approved the zealous reformer; among these was the Duke of Lancaster, and the Queen Ann of Luxembourg: and our first poets also, Gower and Chaucer, are said to have been his disciples. The parliament itself remonstrated against the papal plunder, and the King, Henry VII. resolutely set himself to resist the usurpations of Rome; shocked, on examination, to find his kingdom eaten up by foreign locusts, intruded into all ecclesiastic benefices, by popish *reservations*. But the dread of the anathemas of the holy see held still the consciences of men in thralldom. A few, and but a few, emancipated their minds from these vain terrors.

Blessed

Blessed be God ! These happy commencements in England rested not there. The works of Wickliff crossed the seas, and were eagerly read and circulated on the Continent. The famous Hufs and Jerome of Prague, fell, as we have seen, martyrs for the truth : but multitudes in Bohemia steadily adhered to their teachers. By force, or cajoleries, both Calixtines and Taborites were at last appeased ; they were indulged in some of their desires, respecting the communion in both kinds ; and led to hope for more. The books, however, of their faithful pastors still circulated among them ; and, reduced as they were, to an apparent external conformity, the spirit of the Church rulers, and the doctrines which they inculcated, were utterly different from what the Bohemian brethren had embraced ; and they were prepared to seize the first moment of emancipation from ecclesiastical tyranny.

The vallies of Piedmont contained a hidden treasure, which all the inquisition had not been able to discover or to rob. And the doctrines taught by these witnesses for the truth, which had spread through the South of France, were such as could not but produce the same divine effects, wherever they are embraced in the light, and in the love of them. It would lead me too far to enter upon all the charges brought against Wickliff,

Hufs, and their fellows; but a few of them will mark strongly the spirit of the men, and of their disciples. We plead for no faultless monsters, they were like ourselves, compassed with infirmity; but their hearts cleaved steadfastly to the Lord, and under a great sight of afflictions they fainted not, but resisted unto blood.

The enormities of the popish hierarchy, against which they testified, were the great object of the rising witnesses, and the cause of the inveteracy of their enemies against them: but *the doctrines of free grace*, held by the reformers, were no less abhorred by the ignorant and self-righteous. Mar-
 filius of Padua, had long before strong-
 AN. 1328. ly maintained, that believers are justified by grace alone, and that human works never were the efficient cause of salvation. Wickliff was charged with teaching, “ That the
 “ Church consisted only of the elect—That those,
 “ like Paul belong to it, who are the predestined
 “ and chosen vessels, even before their conversion
 “ —That no reprobate is found in it—That the
 “ true members never fall finally, though for a
 “ time they may be tempted and turned aside—
 “ That the Eucharist is not the *real body* of Christ,
 “ but the *sign* of it—That Rome hath no more
 “ right to jurisdiction than any other church—
 “ That the gospel alone was sufficient to direct the
 “ Christian’s

“ Christian’s faith and conduct—That all prelati-
“ cal imprisonment was anti-christian tyranny—
“ and, that in the conduct of his soul, every man had
“ a right to judge for himself.”

The articles of accusation against Hufs were in exact correspondence with these, as may be seen in Toplady’s *Historic Proof*. He held also, that there was no necessity for a visible head of the Church to govern it, nor the least colour for it in Scripture—and said, he wished his spirit with the happy soul of Wickliff.

The letter of Poggius, the Pope’s secretary, to Aretin, on the defence and condemnation of Jerome, is one of the noblest testimonies which truth ever extorted from an adversary. Yet, innocence is a weak defence, and truth a feeble protection, when spiritual wickedness in high places tramples upon the humble. But there is a God that judgeth the earth. Their disciples continued a faithful band, and under the name of Taborites, having boldly resisted their persecutors, sometimes retaliated upon them the cruelties which they had suffered. They afterwards settled down into a more peaceable state, and put on a gentler spirit. Having new-modelled their Church into a more evangelical system, they were denominated *Bohemian*

Brethren; and from them the *Moravian Brethren* of the present day derive their succession.

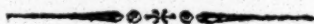
A living Church subsisted, which neither the craft nor violence of men was permitted to destroy; in so many lands was the knowledge of truth diffused, that though despised by the insolent, and trampled upon by the proud, it had taken such fast root, as never to be eradicated: and waited only the moment of opportunity to burst forth and blossom as the rose.

Thus closed the fifteenth century, with superstition triumphant; power in the hands of oppressors; abuses grown inveterate by long ages of prescription; the clergy corrupt beyond conception; ignorance maintained with sacred jealousy among the people; and learning itself hardly daring to pry into the mysteries of iniquity established by law and custom. A feeble band, dispersed and distressed, yet struggled for life, and preserved only by a divine and gracious Providence, still kept alive the vital spark. The fire long smothered, was now however ready to burst out into a flame, and, destined we trust to consume the wood and hay and stubble of superstition, will continue to shine brighter and stronger unto the perfect day.

PERIOD

PERIOD III.

CENTURY XVI.



THE HAPPY REVIVAL OF
EVANGELICAL RELIGION,

FROM THE
REFORMATION TO THE PRESENT DAY.

PERIOD III.

CENTURY VII.

THE FIRST REVELATION OF

EVANGELICAL RELIGION.

FROM THE

ORIGIN TO THE PRESENT DAY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE natural division of these Volumes would have been into the several Periods of the Rise, Decline, and Revival of Christianity: but as the last period approaching nearer our own times affords the greatest plenty of materials and the most interesting, it was not practicable to compress it, with any satisfactory information, into less compass. And the Second Period of the Decline of Gospel Truth in the dark ages being less engaging and entertaining, it could be comprised in a smaller space, and afford a part of this Second Volume for the introduction of a portion of the Third Period, containing the commencement of that happy change, when Truth, triumphant over Error and Superstition, began to lift up its banners, and spread its conquests through the professionally Christian world. May its progress be every day more visible, and its triumphs finally complete.

ADVERTISEMENT

The undersigned, having been appointed
by the Board of Directors of the
City of New York, to examine and
report upon the accounts of the
Commissioner of the Land Office,
do hereby certify that the same
have been examined and found
correct and conforming to the
vouchers and documents
produced in support thereof.

Witness my hand and seal
this 1st day of January, 1864.

JOHN J. HENRY,
Commissioner of the Land Office.

P E R I O D III.

CENTURY XVI.

CHAP. I.

ON THE OUTWARD CHURCH.

AFTER toiling through a long dismal night of papal darkness, and regions of the shadow of death, a beam of gospel day, as the morning spread upon the mountains, revives the fainting spirit.

AN. 1503—1516. The savage BORGIA, the mad warrior, JULIUS, and the Epicurean LEO, sat in succession enthroned amidst all their insolence and abuses; and trampling on the prostrate world, defied their enemies, despised their impotence, and gloried in the stability of an empire confirmed by ages of superstition, and strengthened by legions of monks and clergy, whose terrors overawed the consciences of mankind.

Not that the world was quite insensible of the chains in which they were held—many a sovereign complained

complained of the encroachments of pontifical ambition ; numerous writers attacked the flagrant abuses of the Church ; sometimes with the strong arms of reasoning, and sometimes with the keen shafts of ridicule, for which the follies of monkery furnished an ample scope. Not a nation but uttered its groans under the papal exactions, impoverished to supply the rapine, the luxury, and the ambitious projects of the Roman prelates. Unmoved and tranquil, the omnipotent pontiffs looked down from their high and lofty throne on the suppliant herd, treated their murmurs with disdain, and their requests for reformation with inattention : sufficiently armed to punish the refractory, and having every engine of preferment and wealth, to gain the mercenary, to silence the troublesome, and to increase the number of their zealous partisans. Canon law, long prescription, and the reverence consecrated by the character assumed and universally admitted, of being *Christ's vicerent upon earth*, surrounded the papacy with an apparently impenetrable barrier. The mighty pontiffs sat secure in the exercise of unlimited power, and knew, that whatever redress was sought, must come through their own hands, be courted as a favour, and granted under such conditions as they were pleased to dictate.

A feeble

A feeble attempt to form a general council at Pisa, by Lewis of France, and Maximilian the Emperor, only tended to shew the weakness of opposition, and the impotence of all efforts to reform. The Pope, in the most insulting manner annulled their decrees, and dissolved their assembly; treating them with equal contempt and arrogance.

Leo X. a man of letters, and a man of pleasure, who succeeded the imperious Julius, and presided at the Lateran council, which his predecessor had assembled, not only took care, that not a hair of abuse should be touched, but prevailed on Francis the First to sacrifice the Gallican liberties, by substituting in place of *the pragmatic sanction*, a new agreement, called *the Concordate*, abhorred alike by the French people and clergy. So supreme was the papal dominion over that nation, which had most stoutly resisted its usurpations.

The amazing prodigality, luxury, and magnificence of Leo, began however to exhaust the Church's coffers; and as money must be procured to supply his extravagances, the never-failing resource of indulgences was resorted to, as the most effectual means of levying a tribute upon the whole Christian world, under the specious guise of conferring the most important spiritual benefits.

The

The profligate examples of so many vicegerents of Christ, could not but have the direst effects on the clergy, whom they supported in their abuses, and were reciprocally supported by them. An incredible dissipation of manners followed the loss of all divine principle. Leo X. himself appears to be an infidel, if not an atheist, to which his learning did not a little contribute. When the heart is enslaved by corruption, the more ingenious and scientific a man is, the readier will he be to find arguments to quiet his conscience, and to soothe it in the pursuits which he resolves not to abandon. His sacerdotal legions were not unfaithful followers of their leader; and as the Church and Monasteries wallowed in wealth, they failed not to use their affluence in procuring for themselves every gratification; whilst the best informed could not but laugh at the superstitious piety which had furnished them with the means of indulgence, and enjoy the delusion of the Christian world.

As every preferment at Rome was venal, the rich, the licentious, and the profligate, would naturally be the first purchasers; and the highest offices devolved upon the basest, and most unworthy.

The immensity of the mendicant tribes grew into a burden, which the Christian world could
with

with difficulty support ; and, as every art and device were practised to procure veneration for their several orders, and to fleece the public more abundantly, the most scandalous deceptions were employed, and the grossest frauds attempted, to impose on the credulity of mankind. Sometimes they were detected and punished, as in the case of the infamous Dominican, Jetzer : but oftener the trick succeeded, and the foolish people cried, “ A MIRACLE.”

As the Dominicans and Franciscans had chiefly usurped dominion in the schools and universities, theological knowledge was sunk into quotations from the fathers, or disputes about points of the most trivial import, delivered in all the jargon of scholastic philosophy. And though science revived in a number of literati, such as Erasmus, Agrippa, and others, who, renouncing the subtleties of Aristotle and Plato, with the barren erudition of the dialectics, read and thought for themselves ; yet, the current of education still flowed through these polluted channels, and left the miserable pupils groping for the wall as blind ; burdening their memories with terms, definitions, and distinctions, which communicated nothing of real knowledge, but abundance of conceit and dispute.

The

The ministry of the pure word of God was no longer to be found. The very semblance of it would have been branded as heresy : all pulpits were occupied with panegyrics on the saints ; the transcendent glories and power of the Virgin ; the efficacy of relics for the expulsion of demons from the possessed ; and the cure of all diseases of body and mind : the virtues of those of the neighbouring church or convent, were sure to be peculiarly insisted upon. The fire of purgatory afforded an inexhaustible fund of the terrific ; and the safety of indulgences was displayed in the most moving strains of plaintive eloquence : whilst *good works* were enforced with all their meritorious efficacy, and the building a church, or a convent, or some rich endowment of them, cancelled every crime, and infallibly secured salvation. But, above all, the honour of the clergy, the sanctity of the Church, her unity, and visibility in one head, and unlimited submission to his decrees : *this* was taught as the perfection of Christian excellence ; as it was the depth of heretical pravity, and sure to be followed with the destruction of body and soul in hell, to doubt of one of the dogmas of Rome, or to withdraw a tittle of obedience from the holy see and its pontiffs.

The miserable people bound in chains of ignorance and superstition, submitted to be priest-ridden

den with the most exemplary patience. And whilst they were amused with the raree show of the *mass*, and *processions*, and *mysteries*, gloried in the purity of the Catholic faith, and were led to entertain with sacred horror the idea of any alteration in the Church. The clergy fostered with all their art, an ignorance so favourable to their empire, and carefully watched over every attempt to enlighten the minds of the people with gospel truth, or to correct their manners by divine principles. The more profligate they were, the more they needed absolution, and must recur to their ghostly guides for peace and pardon. Thus the Church reaped the richest harvest from the purchase of her indulgences, as the universal immorality of mankind made them more necessary for the various culprits.

But as the darkest moment of the night precedes the dawn of day, when the Church appeared in the most desperate situation, her deliverance was approaching from this worse than Babylonish captivity. We have seen, during the preceding ages, here and there a spark struck from the Scriptures of truth, that gave a momentary gleam. And though the inquisition, with all its terrors, and the slavish submission of the monarchs of Christendom, seemed to uphold the pillars of the Roman see with Atlantean shoulders, the utter rottenness of the foundation awaited only a bold and resolute hand
to

to make the mighty fabric totter. Indeed, the silent and unnoticed dispensations of God had been preparing for the event, however to human view unexpected and judged impossible. A variety of attempts at reformation had been made; and though generally suppressed, the spirit of opposition remained. Wickliffites, Albigenes, and all the persecuted, hid their heads from the thunders, which they were unable to resist; but they waited the auspicious moment, and only sought for the intrepid leader, and the opportunity to burst their bonds asunder. The glaringness of the abuses was secretly deplored by multitudes, who, without any purpose of change in the ecclesiastical government, sighed for salutary reform. The diffusion of knowledge, through the art of printing, removed the veil which had been spread over all people. The Scriptures themselves were not so inaccessible as before, and many dared to read and think for themselves. The governors of the world, without any intention of separating themselves from the unity of the Church, were not at all indisposed to hear of plans of reformation, which might prevent their kingdoms from becoming the prey of the Roman pontiffs and their legates; and therefore were in no haste to suppress the zeal of those reforming preachers, whom they supposed themselves always able to controul: whilst the pride and security of the papal throne too much despised the
meanneſs

meanness of its opponents, and the feebleness of their resources.

AN. 1513. Such was the state of Christendom, when the increasing wants and rapaciousness of the Roman see made it necessary to attempt replenishing her coffers; and fresh orders were issued to the legates every where, to find the best qualified instruments, to preach and dispense the rich indulgences, which Leo X., in his great munificence, was disposed to grant to all Christian people, who had money to purchase them, for all sins, past, present, and to come. All the mendicant monks were invited to undertake this lucrative commission, and the Dominicans engaged in it with peculiar zeal and activity. As the legates were only careful about the end, how to get the most money; and little scrupulous about the means, provided they led to this object, they selected for this service instruments the best calculated to impose upon the credulity of the vulgar: men of popular talents, unblushing effrontery, and perfect devotedness to the Romish see. Among these the Archbishop of Mentz found the famous monk, John Tetzel: whose craft equalling his impudence, he undertook the task with wondrous alacrity and success, and exalted the value of the favours which he was dispersing with an eloquence, and exaggerated commendations of the efficacy of his indulgences, that could

not but produce among the superstitious multitude innumerable customers. He blazoned the virtues of the saints in colours of the most transcendent glory; vaunted the rich treasures of merit, now opening from the Church's repository; of which the keys were to HIM entrusted. He could exceed all wants; supply all deficiencies; and cancel all crimes. He boasted his ability to save even the ravisher of the blessed Virgin herself; and affirmed, that HE, *John Tetzel*, had rescued more souls from hell and purgatory, by these compleat nostrums of indulgences, than ever St. Peter himself had converted to Christianity by his preaching. The gaping crowd heard with wonder this matchless knight of the golden key, and sent up their money to the stage, to purchase with avidity these precious packets of ecclesiastical panaceas, which were to set their consciences at rest forever.

An inconsiderable monk at Wittemberg heard with indignation these hyperbolical pretensions. He belonged to the Augustin order, and for his learning and talents had been raised to the professorship of divinity, in the academy of that city, by Frederic, Elector of Saxony. MARTIN LUTHER, a name forever to be revered by every real Christian, resolved to check this impudent mountebank in his career; and not to suffer him in the city, where *he* held the divinity chair, to propagate blasphemies, so
opposite

opposite to all revealed truth, without rebuke. He therefore challenged him in ninety-five propositions, to defend himself and his pontifical employers, whom Luther dared to censure as accomplices, for suffering such impostures, and countenancing such abominable frauds and impositions on the people. AN. 1517.

Thus was the gauntlet thrown down, and the first blow struck of that battle, which hath continued to rage ever since, and, after so many turns and changes, appears ready to be decided in the final subversion of papal tyranny, reduced now that I am writing to the dust of contempt, and approaching, I hope, its utter extinction.

Never was a man more formed for the contest in which he was engaged with the see of Rome, than this brave Saxon. His faculties were singularly great; his memory prodigious; his mind fraught with the richest stores of ancient wisdom and literature, to which he had addicted himself; but above all he was deeply read in the oracles of God, and conversant with the best of the fathers and their writings, particularly St. Augustin, the patron of his order. His natural temper was strong and irascible; his courage invincible; his eloquence powerful as his voice; and darting the lightnings of his arguments on his confounded opponents.

No dangers intimidated him ; no difficulties, trials or emergencies deprived him of self-possession ; in perseverance unshaken, in labours indefatigable. Rome knew not the Hercules in the cradle, that was ready to strangle her snakes, and at first despised such impotent efforts. Nor did he himself know his own strength, or suspect or intend the consequences, which would result from this small commencement. But if God will work, none can let it ; and any instrument is sufficient, though it were but the jaw-bone of an ass, when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon the appointed Sampson. Yet, though God works according to the counsels of his own will, we see how wonderfully he provides and qualifies the proper subjects for their peculiar services ; and albeit, the success is wholly from himself, we cannot but admire the instruments he employs.

Malignity and hatred of gospel truth, have not only suggested to popish adversaries, but to more respected protestant, though infidel historians, that Luther, in his opposition to Tetzels, was animated not by zeal for truth, but mean envy for the glory of his order, neglected by a preference of the Dominicans. Even admitting the charge, the providence of God in over-ruling human evil for purposes of his own glory, would not be the less adorable ; but the facts are false upon which such charges have

have been founded ; nor did Luther's most envenomed enemies dare reproach him in that day, with this degrading suggestion.

Indeed the matter admitted of an easy temperament, had it been merely a dispute kindled by ambition, between individuals, or their orders. Leo might have healed the breach by the slightest concessions or modification ; for Luther disputed not the power of the pontiff to absolve from all church punishments ; and only urged that final salvation was attainable by the merits of Christ alone, and *the penance performed by the offender* : so dark at first were his own views of acceptance with God ; but the matter was of the Lord, and therefore not slightly to be healed. The insolent security of the pontiff led him to neglect the extinguishing of the first spark ; and when dispute had blown that spark into a flame, all the deluge of waters from the mouth of the dragon became unable to quench the conflagration.

This was the age of dispute and violence. The propositions maintained at Wittenberg, not only offended Tetzel, but his order, and all the furious partisans of Rome. A host rushed into the battle to bear down the despised monk of Saxony, with their eloquence, their arguments, and church authority. Prierio, Hoogstraet, Eckius, zealous Romanists,

manifests, with many others, displayed their zeal for the Catholic faith, and their abhorrence of its impugner : whom they humbly prayed the Pope to commit to the flames, and silence his blasphemies against authority. But Luther was neither a man to be intimidated by threatening, or to be borne down by the violence of these envenomed disputants. He hurled back upon them the thunders they darted at him ; refuted their arguments, and treated their persons with sovereign contempt. Yet to the Pope he held the most respectful language, as a dutiful son, and as advancing nothing which he would not retract the moment he was convinced of its contrariety to the Catholic faith.

Whether the Pope thought this one of the many nonsensical quarrels which would die away of themselves as others had done before ; or that it was beneath his dignity to pay attention to so inconsiderable an individual ; no reply was made to Luther's letters ; and Leo was only roused from his security, by the information received from the Emperor Maximilian, that all Germany was in a flame ; and that something must be done to suppress it without delay.

Teazed with these remonstrances, the indignant pontiff quitted the couch of indolence, to order to his presence the impertinent reformer. But Luther, who

who knew the court of Rome too well to trust himself in her clutches, prevailed on the Elector of Saxony, who favoured him and his opinions, to apply to the Pope for the decision of the cause in Germany, before the proper tribunal, where it had originated. Leo, unwilling to offend a man of whose influence he might stand in need, consented to refer the matter to his legate CAJETAN, at Augs- burg, than whom he could not have chosen a more improper umpire; a Dominican; the declared friend of Tetzel; and the enemy of Luther. Before him however the intrepid monk pleaded his cause, and, as might be expected, instead of being heard with candour, and answered with temper, AN. 1518. the legate, with the tone of insolent au- thority, commanded him to abjure his opinions as erroneous, and submit humbly to the penance that should be enjoined him by the holy see.

The high spirit of the reformer was not at all dis- posed to submit to such arrogant dictates; and con- vinced how fruitless it was to reason, and how dangerous to resist, he silently decamped from Augsburg, and took refuge in Saxony; lodging his appeal with Leo, when he should be better inform- ed of the merits of the controversy.

To silence this vexatious dispute, Leo issued his decree commanding universal submission to the authority of Rome, as capable alike of delivering her subjects *from all punishment whatever, whether in this world or that which is to come*; and therefore forbidding this article of faith to be ever more brought into contest. Luther had therefore now only to submit, do penance, or appeal to a higher tribunal. He chose the latter, and referred himself and his cause to the next general council.

The Pope too late perceived the error of appointing Cajetan as umpire, and determined to heal, if possible, a dispute which threatened to produce perilous consequences. He sent, therefore, a new legate into Saxony, MILTITZ, a man admirably calculated to repair the breach by his dexterity and his gentleness; and being a Saxon knight, he could not but be particularly acceptable to the elector and his chaplain. By him Leo sent the consecrated golden rose to Frederic, the peculiar mark of his regard; and Miltitz softening down the rigid temper of the reformer by complaisance, engaged him to write a submissive letter to the Pope, from whom he received a most condescending epistle in return. The strongest hopes were now entertained, that the matter would end to the satisfaction of the Roman see, and this rebellion be quelled, as easily
as

as the former ones : but God had in mercy otherwise ordained.

Luther, whose views had not yet probably reached to any extended reformation, and who would have been well satisfied with the removal of the grosser abuses of *indulgences*, was so won upon by the frankness and kind treatment of Miltitz and Leo ; that he consented to be silent on the subject in dispute, if his adversaries were obliged to the same : and he offered to write a general circular letter to all whom he could influence, reverentially to obey the church of Rome. So near to an accommodation were matters brought through the prudence of Miltitz : when the fury of bigotry happily precluded all reconciliation. AN. 1519.

Eckius, the partisan of Rome, had challenged Carlostadt, the faithful colleague of Luther, to dispute at Leipzig, on the deep subject of *free-will*. The day was fixed ; the combatants sharpened their weapons of controversy ; the champions advanced to the field of battle : the university, and a splendid auditory attended the solemn decision, *respecting the powers and freedom of the human-will*. Luther appeared as second to his friend.

Carlostadt maintained that since the fall, we had no ability for good, but what was derived from divine

vine grace. Eckius asserted a native power of self-determining volition to concur with, or resist the divine operations. The one was the advocate for the *sovereignty and efficacy of grace*, the other for the *power and merit of man in his co-operation*.

A second conflict followed between Eckius and Luther, *on the authority of the Roman see over the consciences of men*. And as was the custom of the times, the dispute was sharp, and leading to dangerous positions. Eckius, once the intimate friend, now became the implacable adversary of Luther, and sought to blacken him by every imputation of heretical pravity. Hoffman, the rector of the university, and the moderator of the disputes, dared not decide on these difficult subjects and dangerous enquiries. It became a drawn battle; so both parties retired from the contest with most determined adherence to their own opinion, and pretended triumph over their adversaries; and abundantly more distant from and embittered against each other than when they began.

The amiable and gentle Melancthon was among the auditors of this renowned dispute. He had before approved of Luther's scriptural mode of treating theological subjects, and this great conflict confirmed him in the rectitude of the positions, which Luther maintained. Forever afterwards he ranked
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on the side of the reformers ; though his yielding temper, his love of peace, and some educational prejudices respecting church unity and schism, led him sometimes into concessions injurious to the cause which he defended. Naturally of a timorous spirit, he dreaded the consequences of division : but in an hour of danger no man looked death in the face with greater intrepidity. He was a character more suited to a peaceable state of the Church, than to bustle and contend in the days of difficulty and turbulence.

As noble a monument of faithfulness in the cause of God and truth had already sprung up in Switzerland, ZUINGLIUS. Though not alike famed with the German reformer, he may justly rank his equal in piety, in learning his superior. He had from early youth been shocked at the established superstitions around him, and having devoted himself to the Church, he began before Luther, to explain the scriptures to the people, and to censure with great fidelity, though with becoming temper, the errors of the church of Rome. His scientific attainments and holy conversation commanded the distinguishing respect of his countrymen, and he was early advanced to a stall in the church of Zurich, where his example was as eminently good as his abilities and labours were confessedly great. The very causes which roused the zeal of Luther, acted upon him

him in a similar way, and on the like occasion. An impudent Italian was carrying on the same shameful traffic of indulgences, and met with as warm an opposer in Zuinglius, as Tetzel had found in Luther. Nor was he a man of a less intrepid spirit, though tempered with greater self-command, and in point of extensive knowledge, as it appears by his works, pre-eminent. To him Switzerland was chiefly indebted for the light of the gospel; and his vigorous exhortations engaged the magistracy to cast off the yoke of Rome, and assert their liberty.

While thus the holy flame was kindling at different corners of the earth; and the wiles of the crafty as well as the arm of power employed to extinguish it, Eckius, infuriate with rage, hastened to Rome, and backed by all the influence of the Dominicans and the inquisitors, carried to Leo his bitter accusations against Luther, and urged the necessity of suppressing so dangerous a heretic by the papal anathemas, before the contagion should spread too wide to admit of a remedy. Leo, too indolent to resist the importunities of those who surrounded him, and flattered by the confidence of the facility with which he might silence this troublesome reformer, signed the bull which fulminated excommunication against Luther's person, and ordered the ignominious burning of all his writings. Sixty days

days respite only were allowed him to abjure, repent, and cast himself on the mercy of the pontiff.

Luther, whom the gentle treatment of Miltitz might have won, was filled with indignation, when this sentence was notified to him. And having taken a decided resolution, he determined to separate from the Romish communion, and to do it in the most public manner, in order to testify his contempt of the Pope and his authority, whilst he renewed his appeal to the next general council for his justification. Before the sixty days therefore were expired, he summoned a vast concourse of all ranks, curious to be present at so singular a ceremony, and kindling a fire, he by the hands of the hangman committed to it in presence of them all, the Pope's bull, with the sacerdotal code of canons and decretals, as renouncing henceforth all authority of Rome and her pontiffs; a step suited to his daring spirit; and wise as undaunt-

AN. 1520. ed. Temporising measures were as uncongenial to the man, as ill-suited to the object he had in view. He wished to rouse a spirit of resolute opposition to these tyrannical mandates; to show they might be despised with impunity: whilst by his appeal to a general council, he interested in his favour all who regarded that as the supreme judge of controversy; agreeably to what had been decided at the councils of Basil and Constance.

stance. Thus his renunciation of Leo's authority, prevented not his professing firm attachment to the Catholic Church, and readiness to abide by the impartial decisions of an unprejudiced council.

A second bull, as soon as the sixty days expired, sealed the final damnation of the obstinate heretic; and met the same contempt as the former. Indeed so far from intimidating the zealous reformer, it sharpened his resentment, and roused him to more vigorous exertions, to rescue from these unchristian procedures a body of his countrymen, sufficient to erect a barrier against his enemies, and to form a church more resembling the apostolic model in doctrine, and discipline, than that which he had formally renounced. Happily he found a number of the ablest scholars, as well as most excellent men of the age, ready to join in the necessary reform, to which the weight of Melancthon's influence greatly contributed. The more the subject was canvassed, the more the groundless pretensions of the papacy were detected; and the frauds and superstitions of its supporters brought to light, and exposed to the people; who received with avidity the doctrine of the reformers, and formed a phalanx around them, which defended them from their bloody pursuers. Nor were the princes of the empire, catholic as they were, averse to see some of the pontifical claims disputed; whilst Frederic of Saxony,

Saxony, who had embraced the truth, taught by Luther and his colleagues, afforded them all the protection in his power, without committing himself entirely as a partisan.

AN. 1519. Charles the Fifth of Spain, raised to the imperial throne chiefly by the zeal and favour of Frederic, in opposition to his competitor Francis the First, King of France, was unwilling to disoblige a friend, to whom he was so greatly indebted, and therefore, though hard pressed by the Pope to seize and execute this daring rebel against authority, Charles at the request of Frederic consented, that Luther should be judged by a German tribunal; for which purpose, a diet of the princes ecclesiastical and temporal assembled at Worms.

AN. 1521. There the culprit fenced with a safe conduct from the Emperor, boldly appeared in person to plead his own cause, before that august assembly. Many of his friends dreading the encounter; fearing his own impetuosity would provoke enmity; and knowing the savage cruelty of his judges, ready to violate the safe conduct, in order to glut their revenge, as in the case of Hufs and Jerome, dissuaded him from appearing: but his confidence in the goodness of his claims made him court rather than shun such a public opportunity of pleading the cause of God
and

and truth : and his courage engaged him fearlessly to declare, that, “if he met as many devils at Worms, as there were tiles on the houses, they should not deter him from his duty.”

Yet he charmed his friends as much as he confounded his enemies, by the firmness and temperance of his defence, as well as by the eloquence and force of argument which he displayed on this occasion. Charles, who was compelled to flatter Leo, sought by every soothing caress and earnest solicitation to engage Luther to submit to the Pope. But when he found him inflexible, he menaced him with all the wrath of Rome and the Empire. The undaunted champion firmly, but coolly replied, that, “whenever his opinions were proved erroneous, from the word of God, and his conduct criminal against Christ or his Church, he would ask nothing more to testify the deepest humiliation; but till then, no man had a right to censure or condemn him.” The Emperor, too generous to violate his safe conduct, permitted him to depart: but the unanimous suffrage of the diet denounced the most condign punishment on the obstinate heretic; and on all who should entertain, support, or conceal him; deciding absolutely, that *the Pope was the sole judge of religious controversy in the Christian world*. A tenet so expressly contrary to the Germanic

Germanic liberties, and the received councils, as shocked many of those who would not at all have cared about the case of such an inconsiderable individual.

His kind friend and protector Frederic, who dreaded the consequence of Luther's falling into the hands of his enemies, contrived to waylay him as he returned from the diet; and seized by men in masks, who were in the secret, he was carried off to the castle of Wartenberg, and hid for ten months from all pursuit and discovery. There he employed his leisure and retirement in translating the New Testament, and keeping up the spirit of his friends by letters. His disappearing in this sudden manner raised a strong suspicion of his being made away with by his enemies, and tended to increase the general odium of the people against them; whilst his zealous disciples exerted themselves with greater activity than ever, in spreading the principles of the reformation; to which the absence of the Emperor Charles, whom his own political engagements called away from Germany, greatly contributed. He had indeed at that time providentially too many immediate concerns of importance to himself to occupy his attention, and no leisure to arrest the progress of reformation.

Carlostadt, the friend and colleague of Luther, during his retirement at Wartenberg, took the lead in the work of reformation ; and as its progress was rapid, he improved the advantage of the influence which he had acquired, and resolved to cast down the images which had been so long the objects of popular adoration in the churches, and to expel the idolatrous mass. His own intemperate zeal, or rather that of his followers, is said to have occasioned much matter of offence, by proceeding in too tumultuary a manner. Luther himself sharply condemned their proceedings ; and unable to lie any longer concealed, whilst Carlostadt was thus daring to oppose the papal abuses, he left his hiding place, and set himself again at the head of the reformed.

Some have charged Carlostadt with temerity, and Luther with envy at his activity, and with jealousy lest he should supplant him in the public opinion. And nothing is more probable than that they were men of like passions with ourselves : we plead for no faultless monsters of monkish perfection : but good men as Carlostadt, might expect to have their zeal branded with intemperance ; and the spirit of Luther in his retirement might surely be roused by a nobler principle than envy, to return to the work openly, and put his life in his hand. He might also reasonably fear, that a too precipitate

precipitate conduct would injure the cause which they had equally at heart ; or they might differ in opinion, without evil. I confess, I have always honoured Carlostadt, as a zealous instrument in the reformation : in learning he was Luther's equal, in some of his opinions respecting the Eucharist, more scriptural, and only beneath him in that commanding popularity of address, which no man of that day possessed like Luther.

During these commotions, one great character, which all desired to draw over to their party, conscious of the weight of his influence, maintained a suspicious neutrality. ERASMUS, whom the keenness of his wit, the acuteness of his genius, and the depth of his learning, raised to the pinnacle of universal admiration, had, before Luther arose, begun to sharpen the shafts of ridicule against the monkish ignorance and abuses ; by his writings he had greatly loosened the shackles of blind veneration for the mendicant tribes, and prepared men's minds for the reformation. To him, Luther, Melancthon, and other reformers, warmly addressed themselves. He answered them with all civility, but with the most wary caution not to commit himself as a favourer of their cause ; though he professed to admit the chief doctrines which they promulged, and to acknowledge the necessity of a reform, to which no man had more contributed by

their writings than himself. Yet he dreaded a rupture with the pontiff; and flattered himself the object would be accomplished by the necessity of the case, without violence. He would have been content with *some concessions*, and trembled at the rude hand of hasty reform. His study and books delighted him more than the activity of a labourer in the vineyard: and his temper indisposed him for the stormy ocean, which Luther dared to brave. He professed a high veneration for the bold reformer; and though he shunned all intimacy that would have exposed him to reproach, he did not scruple to condemn the injustice and folly of the treatment which Luther had received from Leo; and plainly manifested his apprehensions, that the enmity of the sacerdotal tribe, more than any real errors of the monk, was the cause of his condemnation. He dreaded also, that the precipitation of Luther would bring him to an untimely end, as it had done so many preceding witnesses for the truth; and that the consequences would be fatal to the cause: and probably the cowardice of his own spirit made him fear to be involved in the dangers which he apprehended. He maintained a cautious reserve on the subject of Luther's writings, and though he condemned the man, because the Church had condemned him, and censured the violence of his proceedings, he declined answering the reformer, to which he was greatly urged, and
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left that honour to the Universities, the Dominicans, and Franciscans ; pretending unwillingness to rob them of the glory. In fact, in all essential doctrines, Erasmus was with the reformers ; and saw as clearly the necessity of correcting the abuses which prevailed in the Church of Rome. But he was a man of a studious turn and timid spirit ; and however much his mind inclined to one side, his dread of consequences bent him as much to the other, and kept him suspended between the attracting magnets. Thus, feared by both parties, cordially loved by neither, suspected by all, he obtained not the favour of Rome, but was left to languish in indigence ; and he shared none of the glory of reformation, by meanly shrinking from the cross. A great man, a good man, an admired man ; but not daring to take a decided part, he remained the victim of his own cautious timidity.

Luther's translation of the bible had now circulated like the sun, through Germany, and cast a flood of light upon the benighted minds of men. His works were diffused through Christendom. England and the Low Countries received vast edification from them. They fanned the fires which had been there previously kindled, though kept under by the strong arm of authority and clerical tyranny. The Saxons, and many of their neighbours, had taken the liberty to reform their own

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abuses.

abuses. The impious mass was abolished ; the convents evacuated ; and the priests chose a wife, a sister, to live in the holy estate of marriage, instead of unnatural and criminal celibacy. The chief of the reformers set the example, and were quickly followed by the multitude of their brethren.

A host of authors now arose to overwhelm the daring reformer with their arguments, or their invectives. Among these the eminence of his station has made the King of England most remarkable ; gained by the flatteries of the Pope and his own clergy, arrogant in his nature, cruel, a tyrant, and friend to tyranny of every sort, he could bear no resistance to established authority : withal a bigotted Catholic, and only driven by his impetuous and criminal passions to quarrel with the holy see, when in compliance with the Emperor it presumed to thwart his violence and gratifications. England had happily, since the days of Wickliff, possessed a precious seed that was to the Lord for a generation ; and the records which remain in the registers of the unchristian and cruel bishops of that day, demonstrate the frequent charges of heresy : the abjuration of some, and the burning of others, afford compleat conviction that the light had not been extinct in our Israel. Tenderden, in Kent, is particularly noticed. Even in the days of Richard the Second, an act of parliament

ment specifies the numerous followers of Wickliff, who preached in many places, *churches, church-yards, and markets, without licence of the ordinary*. A most heretical deed ! These continued to afford continual *matter for broiling*, to the bishops and spiritual courts : and though nothing could extinguish the light in Israel, the faithful few were driven into concealment to avoid the dangers which threatened them on detection, or if but suspected, that they had Wickliff's bible in their houses, and presumed to search the Scriptures daily. Yet multitudes were found approving that great reformer ; and no sooner were the writings of Luther sent over, than they were read with avidity ; and in London, and in many other places, produced such manifest effects, as to awaken the vigilance and accusations of the sacerdotal tribe, whose craft was in danger ; to rouse the alarm of the spread of heresy ; and to call forth the most vigorous exertions to suppress its progress. The haughty Henry VIII. the ambitious Wolsey, and the whole bench of prelates, united in their determination to consume with fire all opponents of papal supremacy : and the King, in the abundance of his zeal, undertook, himself, to write a confutation of Luther's "*Babylonish Captivity* ;" with a defence of the Romish Church, and the Catholic Faith. This royal volume, presented with great pomp to Leo, procured for the zealous monarch,

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narch, the golden perfumed rose of papal benediction; and the great and mighty title of *Defender of the Faith*, in which Henry peculiarly gloried. AN. 1521.

Luther, whose feelings were as keen as his spirit was elevated, looked down upon the puny, popish, monarchical champion, and answered him with a contempt and asperity, which many condemned as disrespectful to Majesty, but which Luther vindicated. No respect of persons, in controversy, was due to a king more than to another man, who dared to blaspheme the King of kings, and to tarnish the glory of his person and gospel.

AN. 1522. In the midst of this turbid state of the Church, Leo X. departed to give an account of himself to a higher tribunal; and left his successor, Adrian VI. to endeavour to compose a contest, which his rashness and imprudence had set on foot.

Adrian had been Charles's tutor, and a man of singular probity. He was favoured by him in the conclave, and raised to the see by his influence. He saw and lamented the disorders of the clergy. He made some feeble attempts to reform them. The disease was too inveterate. Less happy, as he declared, on the papal throne, than in his professor's

feffor's chair at Louvain, he bore the load of dignity with reluctance, and quickly devolved the burden on one more suited to the politics of the tiara.

AN. 1523. The Diet at Nuremberg was assembled in the absence of the Emperor, to compose the disturbances to which the reformation had given occasion. Adrian sent thither his legate; but, on his demise, Clement VI. selected a man more congenial with his own spirit, the famous Cardinal Campegio, of whom England has heard so much. He breathed against Luther and his adherents nothing but threatenings and slaughter; and blamed the tardy lenity of the princes, that had neglected to enforce the decisions of the Diet at Worms. They, on the contrary, presented a long list of their grievances; and prohibited all changes in ecclesiastical matters, till a general council should be assembled to decide the points in controversy. A general council was a word of odious omen in the ears of the Roman pontiff, and equally dreaded as Luther himself.

It is painful amidst the glories of the rising reformation, to record the disputes which broke out among the reformers themselves, and
AN. 1524. greatly retarded their progress. The controversy began between Luther and
Carlostadt,

Carlostadt, about the *manner* in which the body and blood of Christ were to be regarded in the Eucharist. Though Luther had rejected the monstrous doctrine of *transubstantiation*, he supported one little less absurd; that Christ was in the sacrament after consecration, by a *real presence*, as heat in iron when ignited. This has received the name *consubstantiation*. Carlostadt embraced the simpler and more scriptural idea, that the bread and wine were only *signs* and *symbols*; and in this he was cordially supported by the able Zuinglius. The obstinacy of Luther's character is indefensible. He claimed the authority to dictate, which he was himself so averse to allow the Pope. Bitterness of controversy, indeed, ill became such men; nor was the subject of dispute worthy such a contest; which terminated in a schism, unhealed unto this day. Let us drop a tear over human infirmity: learn by experience to bear and forbear: and remember always, that the best of men are but men at the best.

Another and most grievous scourge arose collaterally from the spreading light of truth. The peasants, grievously oppressed and enslaved with emancipation from spiritual bondage, received a taste for civil liberty, and detected many gross abuses of the power of their tyrannical nobles. And who can deny that real oppressions were at
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the bottom of their just complaints? Two famous, or infamous shall I call them, malecontents, set themselves at the head of the irritated peasants, and for a long while wasted the empire with fire and sword. *Munster* and *Stork* were Anabaptists, and swayed by popular talents the credulous multitude to follow their banners. A battle, in which they were defeated, and their leaders put to death, for a while appeased the troubles which they had occasioned, though the sect was not suppressed by the executions of their chiefs, but subsists to this day.

Luther, at whose door the Catholics laid every commotion, defended himself victoriously; and addressed the insurgents to recover them by argument, in vain. The strong arm of power alone could subdue them. Among this host of peasants all were not fanatic, nor of ill intentions. Many were deceived by their leaders, and sought only exemptions from burthens too heavy to be borne. As far as religious tenets entered into their views, the abuses of the hierarchy made them covet, and profess to seek a purer and more apostolic establishment. But, as in all confusions is the case, when once the barrier of authority is cast down, a deluge of unintended evils rushes in, and desolates the soil, which the reformers purposed to improve. Whilst man is the corrupted creature the Scrip-
tures

tures describe him, it is hardly possible but that offences should come; the woe remains with those who give occasion to them.

AN. 1525. FREDERIC, *the Wise*, departing during these commotions, left his brother JOHN, the successor to his dominions, and the head of the Lutheran cause. Frederic had always acted with singular moderation; and though he protected the fervent reformer from all his enemies, he did not wholly break with Rome. He hoped by gentle methods to obtain relief from all the miseries complained of, without a schism being made in the Church. John was of a different mind. Sensible of the pride and unyielding obstinacy of Rome and her pontiffs, he thought, for the honour of the cause, he could not take too decided a part; and therefore, by his own authority, undertook to regulate all ecclesiastical matters within the extent of his jurisdiction. Luther and Melancthon were employed to draw up a code of ecclesiastical directory for Saxony and its dependencies; and the churches were furnished with the most faithful and wise pastors that could be found, in the place of those who had dishonoured their sacred profession by their immoralities, or continued to maintain obedience to a foreign potentate. Many of the princes and free cities followed the example of the elector, John; and thus first a complete Lutheran establish-

establishment was erected through a considerable part of the empire, and the yoke of Rome broken from their necks.

But neither the Pope, the Emperor, nor the Catholic princes, could look on unconcerned spectators of these dreaded innovations. Temporal interests, as well as religious zeal, roused them to concert the means of preventing the spreading evil. This concert of the Catholics, and their designs, were not hid from the Lutheran abettors; and they resolved on a plan of union and self-defence, if the necessities of the times and the attacks of their enemies should oblige them to repel force with force. Happily, the political situation of Charles the Fifth suspended for a while the storm which was ready to burst; and each party rested on their arms.

AN. 1526. A Diet held at Spires, where Ferdinand, the brother of Charles, presided, separated with an agreement, that every prince should order ecclesiastical matters in his own dominions, as he judged best; till a general council should be assembled, to decide upon the controverted subjects. Than this resolution, nothing could be more favourable to the cause of reformation; which only asked peace and tolerance to prosper. Another providential circumstance had happened: the fears
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of the Pope having led him to embrace the interests of Francis the First, after the battle of Pavia, and to form a league against the preponderating influence of the Emperor in Italy. On this, Charles became cool in the prosecution of the Protestants; besieged and took the Pope prisoner; and amidst these conflicts of the superior powers, the poor Protestants in Germany had leisure, and opportunity, to cement their union, and to strengthen themselves against all future opposition. AN. 1527.

But Charles had no sooner carried his designs in Italy into effect, and humbled Clement to submission, than he made a treaty with the pontiff, in which the destruction of the Protestants was designed, and the establishment of the dominion of Charles in Germany a principal object. To this end, a second Diet was convoked at Spires, where the Emperor caused the former resolutions to be rescinded by a *majority*; though they had been before decreed *unanimously*; and, till a general council should be assembled, he forbade any change to be admitted from the Romish established religion. AN. 1529.

The Elector of Saxony, the Prince of Hesse, and the other Lutheran supporters, nobles and ecclesiastics, perceived the snare that was laid for them. If no alteration was allowed, till sanctioned by

by a general council; they saw the cause of Lutheranism must be desperate. They therefore entered their solemn protest against the resolution of the Diet; and resolved to maintain the changes they had made. From this protest, they have ever since, with all who rejected the papal government, received the denomination of PROTESTANTS. AN. 1529.

The Protestant princes notified to the Emperor, by their ambassadors, the resolutions which they had adopted: but Charles, by insolently arresting these representatives of their sovereigns, bid them be on their guard against the designs formed against them; and unite for mutual defence. But alas! the differences of opinion which prevailed among them, prevented their coming to a decisive resolution. And a conference at Marburg, to settle these differences between the Protestant divines, especially on the article of the *real presence*, produced no change in the sentiments of the disputants. Œcolampadius and Zuinglius, opposed Luther and Melancthon: and whilst the former refuted all the charges laid against them, to the conviction of their opponents, in the grand articles of dispute respecting the Eucharist, there is at this day little doubt on which side the truth was found. But Luther was a man not given to yield. All that could be gained, was, to bear with each other in
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the points of difference ; and to wait till God, by the word of his truth and spirit, should give them clearer discoveries of his mind in the controverted points.

The Emperor's approach, for a moment, turned all their thoughts to the Diet at Augsberg, which he meant to attend after so long an absence. At an interview with the Pope by the way, he urged the necessity of calling a general council. But that crafty prelate too much dreaded to commit his authority to such an assembly, and under such an Emperor. Clement urged him therefore to execute upon the heretics, deserved vengeance, as became a dutiful son of the Church. The matter, however, did not appear to Charles so easy of accomplishment ; and he relished not the injustice of condemning men unheard : his dissatisfaction, therefore, with the pontiff, was as great as Clement's displeasure at not seeing the fires for burning the heretics already kindled.

Meantime, the Elector of Saxony, to prevent misrepresentations, and to make the Emperor perfectly master of the subject in dispute, enjoined Luther, Melancthon, and other divines, to draw up a clear summary of the Protestant doctrines. This produced the famed **CONFESSIO OF AUGSBERG**, ever since appealed to as the standard of protestantism.

testantism. In awful suspense both parties awaited the result of this assembly, and prepared their forces for the contest, whether of the pen, the tongue, or the sword. AN. 1530.

The reformation had by this time made a wonderful progress on every side.

Denmark and Norway, under one of the greatest monsters who ever swayed a sceptre, had received early the Lutheran doctrine. It happened to be, politically, highly desirable to Christiern II. among other objects, in his way to despotic power, to humble the clergy; who had engrossed the wealth of half the kingdom, and desired to usurp influence over the whole. To sap the foundation of their power, he invited Reinard, a convert of Carlostadt, and afterwards that reformer himself, to visit him. These laid the foundations of the reformation in Denmark. Advancing with hasty strides under royal patronage, it was alike favoured by his successor; and, in the course of a few years, the final change was accomplished, and popery, root and branch, overturned in the Diet of Odensee, in 1539, under the reign of Christiern the Third, and the ministry of the celebrated Bugenhagenius, the faithful disciple of Luther.

AN. 1527. The great Gustavus Vasa, who, from the depths of the mines of Dalecarlia, rose to the throne of Sweden by the suffrages of his countrymen, as the just reward of his patriotism : not only rescued their bodies from the tyrannical yoke of Christiern, but their souls from the more dreadful bondage of popery. During his conflicts with the Danes for liberty, two noble champions, Olaus Petri, and his brother, had set up the standard of truth in Sweden, and all men flocked to it. The German auxiliaries who came to his help, brought also the Lutheran faith, and bibles with them. And as the bitterest enemies of their country, and the partisans of Denmark and Rome were found in the prelatical order, who possessed the chief strength, wealth, and power in the kingdom, after the massacre of Stockholm, it became absolutely necessary to humble their insolence, and clip the wings of their ambition, before the liberties of Sweden could be fixed on a durable basis. Vasa, whose interest exactly coincided with his inclinations, encouraged with all his weight of influence and authority, these zealous reformers : and, on the settlement of the kingdom, the fabric of popery was utterly demolished, and a purer evangelical establishment fixed, through the labours of Olaus and his colleagues.

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Yet, in Sweden and Norway, they followed a model different in government from the Germanic churches, and preserved the order of bishops and archbishops; though their enormous revenues were abridged, and all their fortified castles and civil power devolved to the crown, the proper possessor of them. In Denmark, the very name of bishop fell with their fees, and *superintendants*, with episcopal privileges, presided in their ecclesiastical councils. That these changes met with violent opposition, may be supposed. Men who had to defend their dignities, their wealth, besides the prejudices of education, did not easily yield; and often exposed themselves to violence and oppression. Great alterations are seldom or ever brought about without very blameable acts of authority in the ruling party. Let no man vindicate abuses in the cause of protestantism, whilst he pleads against them in the hand of popery.

AN. 1539. The great master of the Teutonic order, the ancestor of the present kings of Prussia, following the example of Luther and the reformers, took to himself a wife, and set up the Lutheran profession through Prussia, Magdeburg, and the dominions which he possessed in the North.

Nor could France avoid the infection. Even at court, many of the nobility espoused the new doctrines,

trines, and a vast multitude embraced the Protestant faith, notwithstanding the bitter enmity which Francis I. is said to have expressed against it, and which always rankled in his heart. His political interests compelling him to unite sometimes with the protestant princes in Germany, they engaged him to a momentary reluctant toleration of their brethren in France. But his connections with the Pope, and his own inclinations, oftener led him to indulge his bigotry, in committing the Protestants to the flames, and suppressing the profession of the gospel, by the most atrocious acts of cruelty and oppression. It was to escape the sword of this persecutor, that the famed Calvin, a name, never to be mentioned by a Protestant but with reverence, fled to Basil, where he published that noble defence of the evangelical doctrine, in a treatise, called *Christian Institutes*, dedicated to his persecutor, and admired for its latinity, as well as force of argument.

Calvin was a native of Piccardy ; he was intended for the church ; but, in compliance with his father's wishes, applied himself to the law. The reigning controversies early engaged his attention. He read the Scriptures with the greatest solemnity and diligence, and no sooner examined, than he embraced the doctrines of truth ; which he adorned by a conversation the most exemplary, and promoted

moted with an eloquence that charmed the ear, whilst it carried conviction to the heart. Through his labours, as well as those of Beza and others, famous in their day, men of renown, the cause daily triumphed in Geneva and through Switzerland; and threatened the downfall of the anti-christian power in the South, as it had already fallen in the North. Nor could any thing have prevented a complete revolution, but the united force of regal and papal powers, suppressing, by every atrocity, the spirit of enquiry; and executing, on the more zealous professors, every torment diabolical cruelty could invent. Without this, the reign of popery had then fallen, and not awaited its overthrow to the present day.

Spain, the most ignorant, bigotted, and servile to the Roman see, was penetrated by the light of truth, in spite of all the fires of inquisitors, and their watchfulness to suppress the first approaches of what Rome called heresy. It even passed the mountains, and spread into many parts of Italy, the very seat of THE BEAST.

In Switzerland, it triumphed in many cantons. It entered Hungary, Transylvania, Poland; and every where produced a plenteous harvest, amidst the bitterest persecutions from the ruling powers, and the bloody bishops, whose ecclesiastical

tical courts were crowded with prosecutions, and their prisons filled with confessors. The enemies of truth and godliness pretended not to confine themselves to the Bible, or arguments which they found to be impotent ; but every where had recourse to torments, racks, and gibbets ; the only effectual syllogisms with which they could answer the reformers, and check the course of what they called heresy. The Church of Rome tottered from its foundation. Nothing but the strong arm of power, and the interest which the rich and proud had in maintaining its usurpations, propped up the trembling fabric for a while longer ; till the appointed time should arrive for its final overthrow. For a space, the deadly wound was healed by the kings of the earth, under the papal hierarchy, giving their power to the beast, and suppressing by the violence of persecution, the rising flame of reformation : but the day we hope is approaching for its fall, never to rise up again.

CHAP. II.

ON THE DOCTRINES OF THE REFORMATION, AND
THE UNION OF SENTIMENT AMONG THE RE-
FORMERS.

IT has been often supposed and suggested, that the reformers themselves were at variance on the most important doctrines of the gospel; and, that Luther and Calvin differed greatly in the fundamental articles of their creed: whereas except in the matter of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, all the eminent men among the reformers of that day, concurred in the same fundamental truths:—

1. Of *God's eternal purpose* and *predestination of an elect people*, and those, comparatively few, ordained to life and glory eternal.

2. That man had lost all *ability to do good*, and *freedom of will* to choose it: and was in his nature, as fallen, only inclined to evil.

3. That nothing ever did or can alter this propensity of the human heart, but the Holy Ghost by his own immediate agency upon the souls of men.

4. That a sinner is, and can *be justified by faith only*; and this not of himself; being unable, either to comprehend, or receive the things that be of the Spirit of God; and therefore, *the faith* itself must be *the gift of God*.

5. That *merit* in creature there is none, nor ever can be. From first to last a sinner must be saved by grace.

6. That the vicarious atonement by the one oblation of Christ upon the cross is effectual, not for the many-called, but for the few chosen.

These things are what the reformers uniformly held; as is evident in the conferences at Marburg, between Luther and Zuinglius, Melancthon and Oecolampadius. And nothing in the institutes of Calvin speaks a stronger language, than the answer of Luther to Erasmus, entitled *DE SERVO ARBITRIO*. I shall produce only one paragraph from it, demonstrative of the *one faith*, universally confessed in all the first Protestant churches. It is among our deepest miseries, and the proof of our sad declensions, that we, of latter times, have departed from "the faith once delivered unto the faints;" revived in *that day* in all its primitive glory: and thanks be to God, after long obscurity, again rising in its brightness in the present generation,

tion. May its great Revealer manifest his own almighty influence, and cause the word of truth to run and have free course, and be glorified throughout the world.

Erasmus had attacked Luther on the doctrines of predestination and grace ; and according to the present cant of objectors, he urged, " What can
" be more useless, than to publish this paradox to
" the world ? namely, That whatever we do, is
" done, not by *virtue of our own free will*, but in
" *a way of necessity*, &c. What a wide gap does
" the publication of this tenet open among men,
" for the commission of all ungodliness ? What
" wicked person will reform his life ? Who will
" dare to believe himself a favourite of heaven ?
" Who will fight against his own corrupt inclina-
" tions ? Therefore, where is either the need, or
" the utility of spreading these notions from whence
" so many evils seem to flow ?"

To this Luther triumphantly replies, " If, my
" Erasmus, you consider these paradoxes (as you
" term them) to be no more than the inventions of
" men ; why are you so extraordinarily heated on
" the occasion ? In that case, your arguments affect
" not *me* ; for there is no person now living in the
" world, who is a more avowed enemy to the doc-
" trines

“ trines of men than myself. But, if you believe
“ the doctrines, in debate between us, to be (as
“ indeed they are) the doctrines of God; you must
“ have bid adieu to all sense of shame and decency,
“ thus to oppose them. I will not ask, whither is
“ the *modesty* of Erasmus fled? But, which is much
“ more important, where alas! are your fear and
“ reverence of the Deity, when you roundly de-
“ clare, that this branch of truth, which he has re-
“ vealed from heaven, is at best *useless*, and un-
“ necessary to be known? What! shall the glori-
“ ous Creator be taught by you his creature, what
“ is fit to be preached, and what to be suppressed?
“ Is the adorable God so very defective in wisdom
“ and prudence, as not to know, till you instruct
“ him, what would be *useful* and what pernicious?
“ Or could not *He*, whose understanding is infinite,
“ foresee, previous to his revelation of this doctrine,
“ what would be the consequences of his revealing
“ it, till those consequences were pointed out by
“ *you*? You cannot, you dare not say this. If
“ then it was the divine pleasure to make known
“ these things in his word; and to bid his mes-
“ sengers publish them abroad, and to leave the
“ consequences of their so doing to the wisdom and
“ providence of him in whose name they speak,
“ and whose message they declare; who art thou,
“ O Erasmus, that thou shouldest reply against
“ God,

“ God, and say to the Almighty, what doest thou?
“ St. Paul, discoursing of God, declareth peremp-
“ torily, *whom he will he hardeneth*: and again,
“ *God willing to shew his wrath, &c.* And the
“ Apostle did not write this to have it stifted among
“ a few persons, and buried in a corner; but wrote
“ it to the Christians at Rome: which was, in
“ effect, bringing this doctrine upon the stage of
“ the whole world; stamping an universal *impru-*
“ *matur* upon it; and publishing it to believers at
“ large, throughout the earth. What can sound
“ harsher in the uncircumcised ears of carnal men,
“ than those words of Christ, *many are called, but*
“ *few are chosen?* and elsewhere, *I know whom I*
“ *have chosen.* Now these and similar assertions of
“ Christ and his Apostles are the very positions
“ which you, O Erasmus, brand as useless and hurt-
“ ful. You object, if these things are so, who will
“ amend his life? I answer, without the Holy
“ Ghost no man *can* amend his life to purpose. Re-
“ formation is but varnished hypocrisy, unless it
“ proceed from grace. The elect and truly pious
“ are amended by the Spirit of God: and those of
“ mankind, who are not amended by *him*, will
“ perish. You ask moreover, who will dare to be-
“ lieve himself a favourite of heaven? I answer, it
“ is not in a man's own power to believe himself
“ such, upon just grounds, till he is enabled from
“ above.

“ above. But the elect shall be so enabled : they
“ shall be enabled to believe themselves to be what
“ indeed they are. As for the rest, who are not
“ endued with faith, they shall perish ; raging and
“ blaspheming, as you do now. But, say you,
“ these doctrines open a door to ungodliness ? I
“ answer, whatever door they may open to the im-
“ pious and profane, yet they open a door of righte-
“ ousness to the elect and holy, and shew them the
“ way to heaven, and the path of access unto God.
“ Yet you would have us abstain from the mention
“ of these grand doctrines, and leave our people in
“ the dark, as to their election of God. The con-
“ sequence of which would be, that every man
“ would bolster himself up with a delusive hope of
“ a share in that salvation, which is supposed to lie
“ open to all ; and thus genuine humility, and the
“ practical fear of God, would be kicked out of
“ doors. This would be a pretty way indeed of
“ stopping up the gap Erasmus complains of !
“ Instead of closing up the door of licentiousness,
“ as is falsely pretended ; it would be in fact open-
“ ing a gulph into the nethermost hell. Still you
“ urge, where is either the necessity or utility of
“ preaching predestination ? God himself teaches it,
“ and commands us to teach it : and that is answer
“ enough. We are not to arraign the Deity, and
“ bring the motives of his will to the test of human
“ scrutiny,

“scrutiny, but simply to revere both him and it.
“He, who alone is all-wise and all-just, can in
“reality (however things appear to us) do wrong
“to no man; neither can he do any thing unwise-
“ly or rashly. And this consideration will suffice
“to silence all the objections of truly religious per-
“sons. However, let us for argument’s sake, go a
“step farther. I will venture to assign over and
“above two very important reasons why these doc-
“trines should be publicly taught: 1st. For the
“humiliation of our pride, and the manifestation
“of divine grace. God hath assuredly promised
“his favours to the truly humble. By the *truly*
“*humble*, I mean those who are endued with re-
“pentance and despair of saving themselves: for a
“man can never be said to be truly penitent and
“humble, till he is made to know that his salvation
“is not suspended in any measure whatever, on his
“own strength, machinations, endeavours, free-
“will, or works: but entirely depends on the free-
“pleasure, purpose, determination, and efficiency of
“another, even of God alone. Whilst a man is
“persuaded that he has it in his own power to con-
“tribute any thing, be it ever so little, to his own
“salvation; he remains in carnal confidence: he
“is not a self-despairer, and therefore he is not
“duly humbled before God; so far from it, that he
“hopes some favourable juncture or opportunity
“will

“ will offer, when he may be able to lend an help-
“ ing hand to the business of his salvation. On
“ the contrary, whoever is truly convinced that the
“ whole work depends singly and absolutely on the
“ will of God, who alone is the author and finisher
“ of salvation, such a person despairs of self-assist-
“ ance : he renounces his own will and his own
“ strength : he waits and prays for the operation of
“ God : nor waits and prays in vain. For the elect’s
“ sake therefore these doctrines are to be preached :
“ That the chosen of God being humbled by the
“ knowledge of his truths ; self-emptied and sunk
“ into nothing as it were in his presence, may be
“ saved in Christ, with eternal glory. This then
“ is one inducement to the publication of the doc-
“ trine ; that the penitent may be made acquainted
“ with the promise of grace, and plead it in prayer
“ to God, and receive it as their own. 2d. The na-
“ ture of the Christian faith requires it. Faith has
“ to do with things not seen. And this is one of
“ the highest degrees of faith, steadfastly to believe
“ that God is infinitely merciful, though he saves
“ (comparatively) but few, and condemns so many ;
“ and that he is strictly just, though of his own will
“ he makes such numbers of mankind necessarily
“ liable to damnation. Now, these are some of the
“ unseen things whereof faith is the evidence.
“ Whereas, was it in my power to comprehend
“ them,

“ them, or clearly to make out *how* God is both
“ inviolably just, and infinitely merciful, notwith-
“ standing the display of wrath, and seeming ine-
“ quality in his dispensations, respecting the repro-
“ bate, faith would have little or nothing to do.
“ But now since these matters cannot be adequate-
“ ly comprehended by us, in the present state of
“ imperfection, there is room for the exercise of
“ faith. The truths, therefore, respecting predesti-
“ nation in all its branches should be taught and
“ published. They, no less than the other mysteries
“ of Christian doctrine, being proper objects of
“ faith, on the part of God’s people.”

As I have been charmed myself with the plainness and simplicity of this testimony of Luther, I have produced it, as the most conclusive proof of the sentiments of this great reformer. I wish it seriously to be considered ; and I appeal to every man of common sense, whether any thing can be more explicit, or words less equivocal. Indeed I am ever amazed, that any man of learning, not to say common sense, can, after such plain declarations, dispute what was the opinion of the reformers in the Augsburg Confession, the Helvetic, or the English. That persons may dispute the truths which these contain may be allowed, and welcome. No man is constrained to believe any human articles of faith ; but to dispute the meaning of the reformers in these articles
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is utterly disingenuous, and unbecoming literary men, who have read the history of the times, or the works of the reformers. I will readily admit, that the doctrines of the reformation have very much gone out of vogue, in all the protestant churches as well as our own; but that does not at all alter the case, or give us a liberty to put a meaning upon their articles of faith, the very reverse of what they intended to convey. But, *furdo narras fabulam.*

CHAP. III.

FROM THE DIET OF AUGSBURG TO THE RELIGIOUS
PEACE IN THE SAME CITY.

AN. **I**N awful suspense, the contending parties
1530 awaited the issue of the diet at Augsberg,
but very differently were they affected. A slight
sketch of their situation may be amusing as in-
structive.

CLEMENT, the Pope, dreaded a general council,
to defeat which all his arts were to be employed.
He wished not to compromise the dignity of *his see*,
which having set itself above all controul, would
not stoop to be limited by any superiority, which
these assemblies claimed, and of which the councils
of Constance and Basil had given him fearful
examples; but he had a sensibility peculiarly his
own, as he was a bastard, and might therefore justly
be impeached and degraded, as an intruder into
the viceroyalty of Christ, according to the canons.

The EMPEROR wished a general council, the
deliberations of which he hoped to controul; but
he had also a variety of particular views. He wanted

the assistance of the Protestant as well as Catholic electors, to defend the empire, and particularly his hereditary dominions, which were most exposed, against the victorious Ottomans, who had lately besieged his capital of Vienna, and though defeated, he dreaded their return.. But he had an object still more at heart, to establish in Germany his power, as despotically, as in his hereditary dominions; and to subdue both Catholics and Protestants to himself, which could only be done by deceiving both, and making one the instrument of weakening the other.

The CATHOLIC PRINCES abhorred the reformation, and zealously attached to the superstitions of Rome, wished to prevent all admission of the Lutheran tenets into their territories, and to reduce the Lutheran princes by force of arms, under the Roman yoke which they had broken.

The PROTESTANTS, not well united among themselves, saw all their danger, and endeavoured to avert the storm which they perceived gathering around them. They resolved to maintain the steps they had taken; and to advance the work of reformation which they had begun. But they were in Germany as yet, the weaker party; and in great danger of being crushed by the weight of the Emperor and the Catholic princes. Their interest
therefore

therefore was evidently to gain time ; and by reference of the matters in dispute to a general council, not likely to be held in the present state of the contending parties, to gather strength for the conflicts which threatened them.

With these several views they all assembled at Augsbuurg ; and the Emperor opened the diet, when the Augsbuurg Confession was read by Bayer to the Emperor and Princes, and heard with profound attention. A similar profession of faith was received from the cities of Straßburg, Constance, Meningen, and Lindau, drawn up by Bucer ; a noble defence of the Protestant doctrines.

The Catholics, with the envenomed Eckius at their head, assisted by Faber and Cochläus, produced a refutation of the Protestant Confession : and the Emperor and Catholic Princes, with the Pope's legate, demanded the submission of the Protestants to their doughty champions' arguments. But as these carried not the least conviction to their antagonists, they requested a copy of this pretended refutation, that they might answer it. This was denied ; their obedience to Rome was peremptorily enjoined ; and silence imposed on them for the future. Such proceedings necessarily increased their opposition. They presented to Charles a reply to Eckius and his colleagues, which he object-

ed to receive. The Protestants had therefore only to defend themselves by force, or submit to the oppression.

When Charles found them resolute, he hesitated to drive matters to extremities: and an attempt was made by conferences between the opponents, to see if no temperament conciliatory could be found. Melancthon, too conceding, would have gone great lengths to prevent a rupture, but dared not yield the great truths of God; whilst the Papists urged their party to insist on terms impossible to be complied with. These were accordingly rejected. The Hessian and Saxon Princes withdrew. The Emperor dictated the decree, suppressing the changes which had been made in religion; and commanded all men to return to the papal obedience, at the peril of his imperial wrath: in the execution of which, the Catholic Princes and their party engaged to support the Emperor with all their forces.

AN. 1531. The Protestant Princes now stood upon their defence, and seeing remonstrance in vain, met at Smalkald, and formed a solemn league for the support of their liberties, in which they earnestly invited all those to unite, who had cast off the tyranny of Rome, and wished to preserve their brethren from being compelled to return to the
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the house of their prison. Luther was averse to the way of arms ; but the necessity of the case compelled his consent ; though the bigotry of his spirit excluded Switzerland and the cities, which had presented their confession of faith by Bucer, from the league.

The electors of the Palatinate and Mentz, dreaded the approaching rupture, which now seemed inevitable in the Germanic body ; and endeavoured to reconcile the parties, or at least to suspend the fatal blow. And such was the Emperor's situation, that he was compelled to lend a reluctant ear to the proposal of withdrawing his decrees. The Turks threatened Germany, and the Protestants refused all assistance, till the edicts of Worms and Augsburg were recalled. Nor would they ratify the succession of his brother Ferdinand to the imperial throne, notwithstanding his majority of votes, but on this condition. Necessity bends the most obstinate politician. Charles, to carry these two points, was obliged to yield, and leave the Lutherans to themselves, till the promised council should assemble to settle the differences in religion. AN. 1532.

The great support of the Protestant cause, the faithful Saxon, soon after departed, and left his electorate to his son and successor John Frederic,

equally zealous with his father, but born for adversity. The peace obtained was highly advantageous to the cause of Lutheranism, which many states now openly avowed, who had been before restrained by apprehensions of the imperial decrees. And Clement, though urged by the Emperor, still temporising, contrived to stave off by evasions, the assembling a general council, which he so much dreaded ; and died before any place could be fixed upon agreeable to the several parties. AN. 1534.

During this interval of suspense, events had happened of the most important kind.

HENRY the Eighth, after a long solicitation at Rome for a sentence of divorce from his Queen Catherine, in order to marry Anna Bulleyn, wearied with the tricks of the legate Campegio, and the duplicity of the Pope, to the great joy of the Protestants, threw off the papal authority altogether. The Pope had solemnly promised the King of France, that if Henry would send his submissions to the holy see, he would sanction the divorce ; especially as all the universities had concurred in their suffrage of the unlawfulness of the King's marriage with his brother's widow. But as she was the near relation of the Emperor, and her cause warmly espoused by him, the Pope, who dreaded the Emperor's resentment, and had promised him
to

to support the Queen, was in the most unhappy dilemma. CLEMENT cared neither about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the marriage, and had as little thought about religion in the matter, as the King, of conscience, notwithstanding all his pretended scruples. Impatient at the delays, and irritated with the repeated deceptions practised upon him by the legates, sent to protract the affair, HENRY threatened to withdraw himself and kingdom totally from the papal jurisdiction. CLEMENT would fain have still temporised, and kept the matter in abeyance: but pushed hard by the imperialists, he pronounced the fatal sentence of the validity of the marriage, with the dire threats of anathemas, if the King was refractory. Two days after, the King's submission, which Clement had required, reached Rome. It had happily arrived too late. The Pope dared not retract, for fear of the Emperor; and Henry was a man of too violent a temper to be thus insulted. He withdrew himself therefore and his kingdom, wholly from the papal dominion; and to the great joy of his subjects, especially the favourers of reformation, cut off all intercourse with Rome; which his parliament confirmed: and conferred on their monarch the supremacy in Church, as well as State. But it must not be imagined that HENRY became a Protestant, by ceasing to be a Papist. No, he was

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exactly the same unprincipled tyrannical despot as before, and as disposed to persecute Protestant as Papist, who dared to swerve a hair from his decisions.

AN. 1533. A King of a different sort, JOHN, of Leyden, figured upon the theatre in Germany. He was a taylor by trade; and setting himself at the head of a fanatic multitude, seized on the city of Munster, where he erected what his deluded followers called the NEW JERUSALEM, over which he presided. But this newly erected throne, established in blood and tumult, was of short duration; and ended in the capture and execution of the monarch and his ministers; and the dispersion of the rabble which followed him. They were of the Anabaptist's sect; at that time remarkable for turbulence, though since subsided into a more peaceable spirit.

The EMPEROR, finding his efforts to obtain a general council, which would be at all satisfactory to the German princes, constantly thwarted by the crafty pontiffs, resolved to attempt settling matters himself, in a diet. For this end, he ordered a conference at Worms, between Melancthon and Eckius, for several days; but the disputants appeared as far from each other as ever; and when
assembled

asssembled afterwards, at the diet which met at Ratisbon, no final decision could be concluded. The Pope, by his legate, proposed Trent for the place of the assembling the council. The Protestant princes objected to the place, as well as to the papal claim of summoning the persons who should constitute that body; which, they complained, must in that case be partial: but, as the Emperor and Catholic princes consented, the letters of convocation were issued. The Protestants refused to submit; and Charles, who had now supposed himself able, determined to compel them. Both sides prepared for battle. Amidst the din of preparations, the great reformer Luther closed his eyes: deploring the miseries, he feared, and exhorting to prayer, patience, and mutual forbearance, as the choicest weapons of our warfare. AN. 1546.

He was indeed taken away from the evil to come. The council of Trent assembled. The Protestants disclaimed their authority. The Emperor prepared to enforce their decrees by arms. The Saxon Elector, and the Prince of Hesse, boldly prevented him; and penetrating into Bavaria, were ready to force the Emperor in his camp at Ingolstadt; when the treacherous Maurice, the nephew of the Elector, debauched by the promise of the Electorate, and yielding to the cravings of criminal ambition, fell upon Saxony, and compelled John to retire from Bavaria,

Bavaria, in order to defend his own dominions. Pursued and surrounded in his retreat ; deserted by a considerable part of his army ; and compelled to fight at disadvantage ; he lost the battle of Muhlberg and his liberty together. And Philip of Hesse, his coadjutor, persuaded by his son-in-law, Maurice, to cast himself upon the Emperor's clemency, with promises of favour, and preservation of his estates, was detained prisoner, in breach of the most solemn engagement ; it is said, by the subterfuge of a German word inserted in the agreement ; which would, if true, have only added the greatest meannesses to the most perfidious conduct. AN. 1547.

The Protestant cause now, to human view, appeared desperate. The Emperor, with an army, overawed the diet. Maurice, gained by the Emperor, with the Protestant leaders, consented to submit to the decisions of Trent ; what *they* would be, it was impossible to doubt. But equally vain are counsel and might against the Lord. He can take the proud in their own devices, and disappoint their purposes by the very means planned for their accomplishment.

The plague breaking out at Trent, a few fathers went to Bologna, and the rest dispersed : nor could all the remonstrances of the Emperor engage the
Pope

Pope to bring them back again. Vexed to the heart at these tricks of papal management, Charles resolved to mortify the pontiff, by shewing him that he could act without him. He caused therefore a *formulary* to be drawn up, such as he hoped might be accepted by both parties, because the expressions were so ambiguous, as that each might give it their own interpretation ; adding some concessions to the Protestants, respecting the sacrament in both kinds, and the marriage of the clergy. Hereupon he called a diet, read the decrees which he had ordered to be prepared, and without any suffrage of the princes, enacted this as the rule, till a general council should otherwise direct. Hence this decree received the name of the INTERIM, as it was merely designed to be a temporary expedient.

AN. 1548. As is often the case, what was intended to satisfy both parties, pleased neither. The *Papists* exclaimed against the authority assumed without the Pope ; the *Protestants* complained, that all the essentials of popery were left in full force.

The politic Maurice saw through the designs of Charles, and his intention of erecting his sovereignty, on the humiliation of the princes. He was glad of an opportunity of redeeming his credit with the Protestant powers, among whom he still
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in profession numbered himself; and he was particularly provoked by the imprisonment of his father-in-law, the Prince of Hesse, whom he had unintentionally betrayed, and whom Charles refused to release. When, therefore, on the death of CLEMENT, and the succession of JULIUS, Charles had prevailed on the new pontiff to reassemble the council at Trent; and with his army compelled the diet, held at Augsbourg, to engage themselves implicitly to obey their decrees, Maurice dared to qualify his consent with conditions, judged so derogatory to the papal authority, that the Archbishop of Mentz refused to enter them on the register of the diet.

Meantime, the Protestants, at the close of the diet, commenced their preparations for whatever might happen. The brave reformers, with Melancthon and Bredtius at their head, drew up their confessions of faith to be presented to the council; and Maurice, who merely meant to amuse the Emperor by apparent submission, prepared for effectually resisting his ambitious projects. For Charles was no more Catholic, than it is to be feared Maurice was Protestant; but intended, in the council, which he supposed his present untroubled power could direct, not merely to humble the princes of the empire, and the Protestants especially, whom he most feared, but also to set
such

such limits to the papal jurisdiction, as would prevent the Pope from interfering with, or interrupting his schemes for securing the same despotic power in Germany and Italy, after which he aspired, as in his own hereditary dominions.

In the midst of his imaginary triumph, and self-confident security, the Emperor was surprised at Inspruck, with the sudden approach of a mighty army under Maurice; who had secretly leagued with him many German princes, and the King of France: and rushed upon the unsuspecting monarch. As he had no equal army to oppose, and was himself in danger of being taken prisoner, he

was glad to obtain his safety by the
AN. 1552. PACIFICATION OF PASSAU; containing
a solemn grant of perfect liberty to the
princes, and the Protestant cause. The INTERIM
was revoked; all edicts against the Lutherans annulled; the prisoners set at liberty; and all who had suffered for the league of Smalkald, re-instated in their honours and possessions: and a certain number of Lutherans admitted into the council-chamber of Spire, where justice impartial should be henceforth ministered to Protestants, as to Catholics.

Thus the very man, on whom Charles had depended for the entire subversion of the Lutheran
cause,

cause, became its firmest bulwark, and established it upon a basis which could no more be overturned.

A diet was to be held to confirm all these concessions. After various delays, it assembled at Augsburg; and there, after long deliberations, the equitable conditions were adjusted, which received the name of THE RELIGIOUS PEACE. AN. 1555. The Protestants were discharged from all papal jurisdiction. The states and free cities were to be unmolested, in whatever ecclesiastical establishment they chose to form—animosities were to cease—no persecutions to be admitted on account of religious opinions—and, whoever attempted to violate any of these articles, was to be treated as a disturber of the public peace. Oh that men might always be as reasonable, peaceable, and tolerant!

It is a singular event, and supported by strong authority, that this enemy of the Protestants, who had repeatedly brought their cause to the very verge of ruin, is supposed to have died in the faith he so long persecuted. Wearied with royalty, and the toils which had worn him down, Charles V. wished to end his days in holy retirement. He resigned his hereditary dominions of Spain and the Netherlands, to his son, Philip, and procured the
empire

empire for his brother Ferdinand. He had thoroughly been conversant with the subjects in dispute, and in the silence of solitude, the absence of tumultuous engagements, and the approach of death, the solemn reflections upon these important truths, which he had so often heard debated, led him to different apprehensions respecting them, from those he had before entertained. His dearest friends, and the companions of his retirement, were seized by the inquisitors, the moment their royal master closed his eyes. His preacher, his confessor, his favoured bishop of Tortosa, with many others of inferior distinction or domestics, expired in flames or torture, the victims of that bloody tribunal, and of the cruel Philip, the unworthy son and successor of this mighty monarch. The vengeance they were prevented from inflicting on the master, fell on his peculiar favourites, and spoke the cause of offence.

CHAP. IV.

THE PROGRESS OF REFORMATION.

THE hope with which Henry the Eighth had inspired the Protestants, was greatly disappointed. He had separated from the Pope, but not from popery. And though the excellent Cranmer enjoyed his favour, and was supported by him against his many enemies, the cause of truth dared not lift up its head. The iron rod of power held down every bold spirit, which presumed to dispute the king's supremacy, or infallibility, just as the Pope's before. It is painful to record the tragedies performed by the malignant Gardiner and Bonner, whose compliance with the King's caprices, still left them power to persecute to death, those who presumed to advance farther in reformation than his pleasure allowed. Even Cranmer often held a precarious existence. Yet the authority of the clergy was greatly reduced; and the translation of the Bible, by Tyndal, afterwards a noble martyr, contributed to open men's eyes. Having fled his country to escape persecution, he finished and published his work at Antwerp, and thence dispersed the copies in England; which wonder-

wonderfully spread the light of truth. The number of ministers and people, who, through the writings of the reformers, had embraced the evangelical doctrines, was great : and some of them, as the excellent Bilney, by whom Latimer was converted, with Frith, and other worthies, fell victims to episcopal persecution, and died in flames.

AN. 1546. Happily, the death of this inhuman and capricious monarch opened a more pleasing prospect. Edward VI. his son, though very young, had drank deeply into the principles of the reformation, under the tuition of the faithful Cranmer, who, during his reign, chiefly guided ecclesiastical matters, and filled the sees with men of singular zeal and piety, as Ridley, Latimer, and others. The motley mixture of the former reign now gave place to a more perfect reform ; and became nearly such, as the Church of England still professes. But the prelates, who had maintained their attachment to Rome under the former sovereign, and conformed with reluctance to the changes since established, waited impatiently for a return of the old religion, as Edward's feeble health declined, and promised a speedy demise. A short reign of felicity to the Protestant cause, was succeeded by the accession of the bloody Mary, with her popish advisers. Yet, had the cause of truth so firmly fixed itself in the land, that all the fires

kindled in Smithfield, at Oxford, or elsewhere, were unable to consume the seed of the faithful; though they destroyed many great and eminent individuals. Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, were consigned to the flames; but their blood produced a plenteous increase.

AN. 1553. MARY was a bigot, and dupe to the popish party. She thought to avenge her mother's quarrels, by sacrificing every Protestant to her resentments; but the reformation had taken such root as not to be eradicated. Though the chief men in church and state were generally swayed by their interests to embrace the courtly religion, a noble army of martyrs, bishops, priests, and laymen, chose rather to die for Christ, than commit idolatry, and countenance superstition. Happily for the nation, though the mischief done in a short time was abundant, God put a period to Mary's bloody reign, and the crown devolved on Elizabeth, the daughter of the unhappy Boleyn. She inherited a portion of her mother's goodness and protestantism, though mixed with a greater measure of her father's despotism. AN. 1558.

IRELAND, which had long been as the satellite of the superior planet, and followed her revolutions, had shared in all the struggles and all the blessings of the reformation. Under Edward, and the excellent

cellent Archbishop of Dublin, Brown, the Protestant cause had compleatly gained the ascendant; though the wildness of the country left the provinces distant from the capital, overrun with popery, as they are to this day. On Mary's accession, the fire of persecution began to kindle; but nearer concerns at home cast the affairs of Ireland into the back ground. At last a zealous Romanist, a Dr. COLE, was dispatched with a full commission, like Paul, the persecutor, going to Damascus, to spread slaughter over the devoted Protestants. On his journey, being waited upon by the Mayor of Chester, he could not withhold boasting of the charge committed to him, and producing from his baggage a roll; "This," said he, "shall lash the heretics of Ireland into obedience." The good woman of the house, where he lodged, heard and trembled; but acute in her wits, as zealous in the cause, she resolved to play the Doctor a trick, and as he attended the Mayor to the door, and left his boasted roll upon the table, she whipped up, and instead of the commission, she put into its place a pack of cards wrapped like it, with the knave of clubs facing the back. The Doctor, as soon as the packet was ready for sailing, passed into Ireland; and in all the pomp of an inquisitor, appeared before the lord lieutenant and privy council at the Castle, ready to enter on his office. The secretary being called upon to open and read his

commiffion, he was as much furprised as the Doctor was confounded, to find nothing but a pack of cards, and the knave of clubs facing him. The ridicule of the fcene may be eafily imagined. The lord lieutenant and privy council could not authorife any proceedings without a new commiffion; and defiring the Doctor to return to England, and haften back, he jocularly faid, that in the interim he would fhuffle the cards. But before the bufinefs was difpatched, the Queen departed to give an account of herfelf to God, and the Doctor was left with the knave of clubs.

SCOTLAND could not fail imbibing the spreading contagion. The Scotch, always warlike, and men of acute minds, had many of them returned from the foreign countries, where the reformation had been introduced, and brought to their native land the books and tenets of the reformers. Long had the truth struggled againft the power and craft of popifh tyranny; and many a martyr, and many a confeffor consented to go to prifon and to death, rather than abjure the faith once delivered unto the faints. No monarch had yet attempted to break the yoke, and the priefthood was
AN. 1559. triumphant, till the intrepid Knox arofe, rude as the bleak climate which gave him birth. Having formed with Calvin, at Geneva, the ftrictest friendship, and adopted all his opinions refpecting

respecting church government, he returned to his native land ; and with his rough eloquence, and hardihood that knew no fear, he bore down all opposition, overturned the whole popish hierarchy, and established the Presbyterian government in its stead, to which the Church of Scotland still adheres,

THE BELGIC PROVINCES being nearer the scene of action, early received the light of gospel reformation ; and none suffered more severely for their adherence to the faith, than that afflicted country. The obdurate bigot, Philip, resolved to extirpate all who refused subjection to Rome. The bloody inquisition was set up in the provinces ; and the more cruel Duke of Alva, his general, poured out the Protestant blood as water on every side. Revolt against this oppressive dominion, rent the provinces in twain. A part defied their enemies ; and, in a war, of which we have few examples, maintained their liberties, and triumphed at last over their persecutors. The Dutch republic, under the famous William of Orange, stood as high in majesty against the humbled Spaniard, as they were distinguished for the purity of their religious faith and practice. *Heu quantum mutatus ab illo !* The present change is as degrading to the country, as afflictive to the mind of every true

Protestant. May a phoenix rise from the ashes, and her youth be renewed as the eagle's.

SPAIN, and the Spanish dominions in Italy, had received the beam of reformation. The very doctors brought by Charles the Fifth to combat Luther, caught the fire from his lips, and carried back to their country the heresy they came to subdue. But there the bigotted monarchs, and superstitious clergy, fiercely set all their engines at work to suppress the hated innovations ; and, after torrents of bloodshed, by martyrs innumerable ; tortures, racks, and gibbets prevailed to extinguish the flame. The light of truth was clean put out, and obscure darkness has there reigned ever since, with debasing superstition, beyond that of any other country. I include Portugal, where the same steps, under the same monarch, produced the same miserable effects, to the utter subversion of all gospel grace and truth.

The Spanish dominions in Italy shared nearly the same fate ; and though Naples would not admit the inquisition, the persecution of the reformers was equally inveterate. The brave Ochino, and the excellent Peter Martyr, exerted their zeal and eloquence ; not quite in vain, but without being able to effect a national change. Compelled to fly for their lives, they took refuge in foreign lands,
and

and watered the garden of strangers with the dew of that heavenly wisdom, which their deluded countrymen prevented from dropping on themselves.

Through all regions under papal jurisdiction, every effort of craft and cruelty was employed; and from the Alps to the extremity of Calabria, the name of Protestant exterminated.

Thus stood the account, at last, between Protestants and Papists in Europe. Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Brandenburg, Prussia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Holland, all Protestant governments. Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Belgic Provinces under the Spanish yoke, all papal. Germany, with its vast dependencies divided, and nearly poised in interest between both, every state having a mixture of its opponents; in some tolerated, in others persecuted. Switzerland divided, but the preponderating weight, and greater numbers, Protestant; and France, more than once on the equilibrium, ready to change its dominant religion; and at last returning to the house of bondage, though with millions of its inhabitants firm in the Protestant faith.

The numbers were still on the side of the Catholics, and their union under one visible head, greatly in their favour, politically speaking; whilst

the Protestants quickly separated into two great bodies, besides other sub-divisions, at the heads of which were Luther and Melancthon on the one hand of the *Augsburg Confession*, and on the other, of the *Helvetic Confession*, were Œcolampadius and Calvin. These also were pretty nearly balanced. In the north Lutheranism generally prevailed. Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the far larger part of the German Empire, followed the Augsburg Confession; whilst the British islands, Holland, Switzerland, Geneva, France, and many estates of Germany, adopted the confession of faith, which hath since obtained the name of the reformed, or Calvinistic.

CHAP. V.

ON THE LEARNING AND HERESIES OF THE TIMES.

THE general conflict, which now agitated the Christian world, contributed exceedingly to sharpen the ingenuity of the combatants; and to excite the greatest zeal of enquiry into every branch of knowledge. And, as such seasons peculiarly rouse and bring forth the latent sparks of genius, which would otherwise lie dormant and unnoticed, never was there a more vivid light of learning displayed, and a greater number of men of the first abilities produced on the theatre of the world. Every where seminaries, and universities, were endowed, erected, enlarged, and the numbers of students immense. The mode of tuition also in all Protestant countries became amazingly improved; and all the sciences, as well as theology, placed on a different footing. Aristotle, though still prevalent in the schools, was controuled from exercising his former despotic rule, by the good sense, the enlarged views, and the sound divinity of the times. The ingenious Ramus, in France, introduced a different method of reasoning, which exasperated the old partisans of the Stagyrice: and Paracelsus began

began to open the road to the higher progress of experimental philosophy, by his researches into the first elements of bodies, by fire, and solution : though still tinged with the follies of magic and alchemy, yet his chemistry led the way to all the noble improvements which have since been made,

The immense impressions of ancient classical writings, through the indefatigable labour of editors, and the happy invention of printing, spread a general diffusion of knowledge and love of the *belles lettres* through all the nations ; especially those who were reformed ; where science of every sort was peculiarly cultivated : and, above all, scriptural knowledge was pursued with singular avidity. Not only was the Bible now in every hand, in their native tongue ; but the comments and expositions, critical and practical, of the reformers, excite the approbation, and continue to promote the edification of the present day, however highly advanced in all the attainments of criticism and literature. I will only mention the Comment of Luther on the Epistle to the Galatians, as an enduring monument of sound divinity, and biblical erudition : and the Institutes of Calvin, equally admirable for their argument as their latinity. But the freedom of enquiry now introduced, in minds untaught of God, and rising on the flits
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of vain imagination to a wisdom above what is written, was naturally productive of very fearful consequences. Science when, under the controul of faith, and bowing before revelation, it presumes not to intrude into the things it hath not seen, is a blessing to the Church, and highly contributive to every thing which is excellent and of good report. But where men, vainly puffed up of their fleshly mind, suppose *that* wisdom of man which is foolishness with God, and *that* intellect, which is darkened through corruption, capable of deciding respecting truths above our comprehension, though implying no contradiction to the truest reason, then error and blasphemy come in like a flood. Revelation stands at their bar as a culprit, because, challenging implicit submission, which they are indisposed to pay; and every thing mysterious must pass through the ordeal of their philosophy, and be rejected or admitted, only as it accords with, or differs from, their supposed infallible reason. Hence arose a numerous host of anti-christian doctors, who are still increasing; and threatening us with as fearful a deluge of false philosophy, to overwhelm the Christian name, as before it had been menaced by superstition and popery. Helvetius, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, Gibbon, and all the infidel tribe of this day, are but the spawn of Pomponatius, Bodin, Rabelais, Montaigne, Bembo, Bruno, Taurellus, and a multitude of others, who then treated
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all religion with contempt and ridicule, and insinuated, that Christianity deserved no more respect than Paganism or Mahomedism; and was but a cunning fable invented by priests to enslave the minds of the credulous. These acute geniuses, indeed, did not always agree in the extent of their discoveries: some were disposed, as the followers of Socinus, to allow the Christian Saviour a name among the sages deserving honour; others ridiculed the impostor, and turned his miracles into contempt: yet they professed veneration for a Supreme Being, and supposed there might be a God; whilst the more advanced in science, doubted his very being or existence, and proceeded to the summit of human wisdom, to know exactly (what the fool or wicked man wishes, and faith in his heart) that "there is no God." France, eminent in that day as in our own, singularly took the lead in this happy discovery, hid from ages and generations: yet, for a long while bending the neck under the yoke of authority, she dared not, till of late, assert the reign of liberty and atheism.

But let it be remembered, that learning is no more to be blamed for its abuse, than the sun for the venomous and poisonous reptiles hatched by his fervid beams. The revealed truths of God, so far from shunning investigation, call for the most accurate enquiry into their nature and evidence, and
approve

approve themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, whom sin hath not enslaved, and taught to reject what he *dares not believe*; and where science, falsely so called, hath not prejudiced the mind against evidence, abundantly more conclusive than any upon which the infidel builds his own system of religion, or no religion. The rationalists are mistaken if they think wisdom shall die with them.. The simplicity which is in Christ will carry conviction of the truth to the heart, in defiance of all its open or insidious enemies, and more dangerous, though pretended philosophic friends. It stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God: and as many as are ordained unto eternal life, believe to the saving of their souls. With regard to all the rest, their evil heart of unbelief is departed from the living God, and "How then," saith Christ, "can ye believe?"

CHAP. VI.

ON THE ACCESSIONS TO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

IN Europe scarcely any people now remained, who had not assumed the outward profession of Christianity. Even in Finland and Lapland, thinly scattered amidst their mossy mountains, and everlasting snow, the inhabitants received from some zealous Swedish missionaries the gospel light. It is feared that some few continue in heathenism unto this day, or with such a tinge of Christianity only, as scarcely forms a shade of difference. In these inhospitable regions, magic and witchcraft have taken their last refuge.

But a vast field opened for the diffusion of the word of truth, in the discoveries made in both the Indies. The Spaniards and Portuguese, eager to extend the pale of popery as well as their own dominion, not only spread these by fire, sword, and inquisition, but enlisted under their missionary banners regiments of friars, black and white, Franciscans, and Dominicans; and above all the rest, the newly instituted and more specious
AN. 1550. company of Jesuits, who penetrated into
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the depths of America, Africa and Asia, and endeavoured to erect the banner of the Cross in China and Japan. Nor were their labours without the appearance of vast success, however the religion which they taught was far removed from the truth as it is in Jesus. To me indeed, and those who think as I do, it will be a matter of doubt, whether the disciples of a Xavier, or the converts of Loyola and Dominic, with their partisans of the Romish superstition, should be admitted among the number of Christians; or their labours be thought to have contributed to the promotion and furtherance, or the disgrace and hinderance of the true religion of Christ. Certain it is, that the methods these men pursued tended much more to make disciples to themselves and the pontiffs of Rome, than to form the mind to the reception of evangelical truth, or the heart to the love and service of a reconciled God. And the zeal of these apostles, fiercely as it burned to make converts to their opinions, burned more fiercely in inquisitorial flames, against all who wished to worship God in the way they called heresy, and opposed their falsehood and perversion of the doctrines of the gospel, as well as condemned their idolatry and superstitious practices, as subversive of its most fundamental principles.

A feeble effort was made from Geneva, to send missionaries to America, among the poor untutored

Indians: though no success appears to have followed the attempt. The settlements of the English in North America, at the latter end of the century, laid a foundation for a happier issue; and opened that great door and effectual for the preaching the gospel which hath since been attended with such abundant success. Yet it must not be concealed, and ought for ever to be lamented, that settlements made with commercial views, however ultimately the means of introducing the true religion, have usually commenced with acts of oppression highly indefensible; and with the erection of a dominion in lands to which the invaders had no just title. God can indeed bring good out of human evil, but the evil is not the less, because of the providential benefits ultimately resulting from the commerce or conquests of wicked men.

CHAP. VII.

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE TRUE CHURCH.

WHEN the reformation became established, the different nations professing the Christian name divided : three great bodies, each claiming to be the *true Church*, and in general *exclusively* so, composed the Christian world. The most ancient, *the Greek Church* ; the more modern, the Latin or *Western Church* ; and the late vast rent made from it, now distinguished by *the Protestant Church*. As my object in this account, is the *Spiritual Church* of Christ, and not the formal and nominal one, which under pomp, ceremonies, and superstition had smothered all vital godliness, my chief attention will be confined to the latter. Nor therein shall I presume to find a general body of real Christians, far from it. The faithful were ever few. The Protestants themselves, as a body, were only in *name*, what their confessions of faith should have led them to be in *reality* ; and therefore among *them*, as ever before, the Spiritual Church must be followed by the traces of the Cross under which it groaned, and the reproach of Christ, which ever rested upon the disciples of the Son of God ; as it

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must forever do on those, who holding up the word of light, in its purity, and adorning it by a conversation becoming godliness, upbraid their fellows for their hypocrisy, and dereliction of the principles, which they have professed; bearing witness to their deeds, that they are wrought in darkness: and thus as sharply condemning unfaithful Protestants, and apostates from the gospel, as the idolatries of popery, and the debasements of superstition.

SECT. I.

THE GREEK CHURCH.

THIS eldest branch of Christianity still subsists, though reduced by the Mahomedan power to the lowest distress; and deprived of all its former splendour. Every attempt to form a union with, or rather to obtain a submission to, the Roman pontiffs, constantly failed; and ended usually in mutual anathemas. After the taking of Constantinople, the glory of her patriarch faded greatly, and his dominion was equally reduced; though he still exercised some authority over the other three great patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. Russia, the present chief member

member of his communion, has long withdrawn herself from his obedience, and is governed by her own patriarch, who acknowledges no dependence on Constantinople. His nominal dominion, however, is still wide, extending over all the East, Greece, the isles of the Archipelago, Walachia, Moldavia, and reaching into Poland. But the very abased state of the Greeks, their ignorance, superstition, and total abandonment of all that can be reckoned worthy the name of Christian, renders their history little interesting, where the object is the enquiry into the living Church.

The divisions, that have been mentioned before, still subsisted in the eastern church. The Nestorians, and Monophysite Christians had their independent patriarchs; not under the Constantinopolitan jurisdiction, and if any real religion subsisted it was probably to be found among the Nestorians, who were said to be neither so superstitious, nor so much loaded with rites and ceremonies, as their brethren. The Jacobites, Cophts, Armenians, Abyssinians, and a variety of inferior sects, were branches of one or other of these greater sectaries. They had their own convents, bishops, and pastors, equally jealous of their independence, and I fear in general far from every thing which could deserve the name of real godliness. The Romish missionaries have exerted their endeavours to bring

over all these various sectaries to the church of Rome; and have, by influence and money, prevailed on some congregations to make profession of obedience to the Roman pontiff: on which new bishops and patriarchs have been pompously created to fill these Romish sees, under an idea of his recovered dominion. But in general it hath been an imposition; and the converts to Romanism only held in subjection whilst the cause operated, of poverty receiving support.

As impotent have been the efforts of Rome to obtain dominion over the rising nation of the Russians: all attempts in the issue proved abortive; and have for a long while been abandoned.

Whatever dignity or prerogatives are still preserved to the patriarch of Constantinople, he is obliged to purchase them dearly of the Turkish vizier. And though an election to that high office is made by the adjacent bishops, yet through the ambition of supremacy, tempting these base ecclesiastics on one hand, and the avarice of the Turkish rulers on the other, the changes are frequent, and the see goes to the best bidder, who is sometimes hardly enthroned, before he loses his honours and purchase money, to be displaced by some other bishop, who can bribe higher.

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The state of contempt, oppression, and ignorance into which they are sunk under the Mahomedan government is deplorable; and the corruption of manners among their priests and people awfully universal: tenacious only of their miserable forms and ceremonies, in which all their Christianity consists, and strangers alike to the gospel doctrines, and the purity of godliness. The latest accounts of the Abyssinian church, by Bruce, hardly manifest a ray of true Christianity remaining. And Russia even now, has scarcely emerged from the common sink of ignorance, intemperance, and superstition.

The Lutherans at first attempted to form a union with the patriarch of Constantinople, and the wise and gentle Melancthon, sent their confession of faith to him. But alas! the pride of Greece was just as great as the pride of Rome; and coalition with the superstitions of the one as impracticable as with the other. Since then I believe they have been left without farther application, to the enjoyment of their own saints, relics, dignity, poverty, pride, and ignorance.

SECT. II.

THE CHURCH OF ROME.

THE right arm of popish power and dominion was cut off by the reformation. Every attempt to regain their lost authority has proved abortive. Thousands upon thousands have fallen by the sword of war, and the inquisitors, but the fatal blow was struck, and though every effort hath been made to heal the deadly wound, it was incurable; and Rome now seems hastening fast to final destruction.

Yet the pontifical see remained eminent in power, wealth and dignity; and lorded it, though not with such despotic power as before, over the nations under its obedience. A new model was formed for the political management of its interests; and though none of its pretensions were abated, a general council was still supposed by many to be paramount over all the Christians in the Roman pale. However, the infallibility of the holy see became better secured by a previous consultation with the principal cardinals, in matters of religious controversy; which prudence now made necessary, before
any

any bull issued. A variety of separate *congregations* were established, for different branches of business, among which one *for relics* is not forgotten ; that all matters might be transacted with the profoundest policy, and occasions prevented for Protestant accusations. And in these *congregations* many things were carried, and adopted in opposition to the opinion of the infallible head.

The monarchs of Europe gained greatly by the reformation. The fulminations of the pontifical see lost all the momentum, that had before made the strongest Colossus to tremble. It was seen in the case of the English King, how dangerous it was to provoke those who could so easily avenge themselves. And therefore the pontiffs cautiously contented with assuming the same power, made a virtue of their clemency in not exerting it. As they could proceed no longer in the way of open war, it became more needful to provide secret, but mighty agents to prop up the pillars of their tottering throne. The mendicant tribes had rather fallen into disgrace, and some of their branches had given much vexation to the holy see, as the Fratricelli. Auxiliaries were wanted, who should unite learning, zeal, and genius, with the most devoted submission to Rome and her pontiffs ; whose abilities might introduce them into the cabinets of monarchs as confessors ; whose science might dispel

ignorance from the schools ; and whose unlimited obedience might render them proper tools, to spread as missionaries, the Roman supremacy, through the old world and the new : exactly such were found in the *order of Jesuits*. The fanatic, but intrepid

Loyola was their founder ; and the Roman. 1550. man see adopted them with cordial affection, as its devoted satellites ; imposing on them, among other common vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, an additional engagement, “ to hasten without hesitation to any “ part of the earth, and for any purpose, which the “ pontiff should enjoin them.” For this end, a choice selection was made, of the most ingenious, the most learned, the most adroit, and the best skilled in mechanic arts, as well as mathematics, painting, and philosophy. Their zeal and activity roused the slumbering Franciscans and Dominicans to jealousy. They buckled on their armour afresh, and sharpened their weapons to contest the palm of victory with their brethren of the new fraternity ; and in nothing yield to them in devotion, and loyalty to the holy see.

The accommodating manners of this new order ; their profound dissimulation ; their artful insinuation into the courts of princes, and the secrets of men ; their penetration in the discovery of the
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best means of effecting their purposes ; and their easiness in relaxing the severity of penance and morals, according to the rank of the penitent ; soon procured them universal preference. All the malice and envy of their brethren, though exerted to bring them into suspicion, and to diminish their influence, was abortive. The favour of Rome, but much more their own policy and cunning, preserved and increased the credit of the order, and raised it to the summit of eminence, above all their fellows ; an eminence they long maintained : and by their activity and artifice supported and enlarged the bounds of the papal jurisdiction.

Yet in the vigour of youth, and the zenith of their prosperity, the good archbishop of Dublin, Brown, ventured to pronounce their doom with a precision approaching prophecy. After speaking in his sermon of the wondrous progress the Jesuits were making in the world, and which their very constitution was formed to produce, he adds, but, “ God shall suddenly cut off this society, even by “ the hand of those who have most succoured them, “ and made use of them, so that at the end they “ shall become odious to all nations. They shall “ have no resting place upon earth, and a Jew shall “ have more favour than a Jesuit.” The appointed time came. The Roman power itself is humbled
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to the dust, and to this nothing has more contributed than the destruction of this very order by the papal see itself. AN. 1773.

A variety of other *orders* arose, whose names I shall only mention, without their particularities, the *Theatines*, *Barnabites*, *Fathers of Somasquo*, *Priests of the Oratory*, &c. all professing to revive the ancient sanctity of manners, and to exhibit a purer model than the debased state of the monastic orders, and the clergy in general afforded. This decline was a favourite topic of the reformers. Indeed their rebukes, I may call them invectives, roused the whole sacerdotal tribe to a greater decency of conduct. The inferior clergy at least, put on a face of gravity, and external sobriety and seriousness; and the different *orders* entered upon various reforms; a proof how much they were needed. Hence arose the new branch of Franciscans, who adopted the rigorous rules of St. Francis, and bear the name of *Capuchins*, from the additional cowl added to their habit; which innovation offended highly many of their brethren; but was confirmed by the Pope, and continues the badge of their order.

So far indeed the church of Rome itself highly profited by the reformation. The honour of their
vocation,

vocation, and the desire to remove the reproaches of the Lutherans, produced much more beneficial effects than all the canons of the council of Trent. Nor less did the same cause operate, in stimulating them to excel in literature; wherein the Jesuits set an admirable example. Indefatigable in pursuit of knowledge themselves, they became the preceptors to others, in all polite literature as well as theological learning. Still adhering however to Aristotelian subtleties in dispute, in order to puzzle adversaries, whom they could not confute. Hence the Romish church furnished a host of men, high in reputation for attainments in science of every kind. And thus they were as much indebted to the reformation, for the revival of literature, as for the amendment of their morals.

Yet this amendment rather reached the inferior than the superior clergy. The popes themselves, though more decent in general than before, continued many of them to dishonour the high station in which they were placed, and shewed themselves as much beyond shame as above controul. In the beginning of the century, Pius the Third, had, besides other acts of atrocity charged upon him, raised his two bastard sons, in their infancy, to be cardinals. And his successor, JULIUS the Third, was no sooner seated on the throne of St. Peter, than he placed

placed the red hat on the head of the boy, who was the keeper of his monkeys, and the object of his infamous passion.

The greater bishops, whose immense revenues afforded them all the magnificence of earthly grandeur, displayed few of the features of the lowly Nazarean. Many of them princes of the empire, exhibited all the pomp of majesty, as well as the luxury. And the courts of monarchs attached the prelates in general, more than their dioceses; to which they regarded it as a kind of banishment, to be confined. Yet upon the whole, throughout the papal pale, there was a considerable change for the better in the manners of the clergy; and they became in general less profligate, and their minds better informed.

AN. 1545. The council of Trent had assembled to ascertain the *doctrines*, restore the *discipline*, and correct the *manners* of the Church; to all which it applied but ineffectual and miserable remedies. Though the papal power swayed all the deliberations, and the legates dictated the decrees, still the popes arrogated to themselves the sole right of *interpreting them*. And for that purpose, an especial *congregation* at Rome was appointed. So that after all the pretences of the council's deliberation and decision, it remained with the pontiff to enforce
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what he approved, and to interpret the rest according to his own pleasure and interest. Thus after the farce of many years assembling and debating, all depended still upon the great interpreter. It was impossible therefore, that any other result should spring from all this wondrous body of collected wisdom, than just what we see, the maintenance of the despotic power of the Roman prelate, and the confirmation of all past abuses, with the addition of many more.

I shall not enter into the decrees of this council, which would carry me too far, and shall only observe that its decisions were admitted only partially in some states, and with modifications and *salvos* in others. Nor did its determinations put an end to the disputes of Catholics among themselves, any more than prove in the least satisfactory or convincing to the Protestants. Their boasted *unity* of doctrine was very weak indeed: and the reproach cast on the Protestants, and their differences of opinion, and which indeed they deserved for their religious disputes, was as applicable to the papists themselves. Franciscans against Dominicans, and Thomists against Scotists, maintained unceasing battle. The bishops contended for their divine right and jurisdiction against the Pope, who denied them both, but as a favour of the holy see. The Gallican church maintained her liberties against
papal

papal encroachments; and all on this side the mountains exalted the supremacy of general councils above the Roman see. The Jesuits drew upon themselves the keenest invectives of the Benedictines and others, for their impudent encroachments, and suspicious morality. Matters of the greatest moment continued to be disputed, nor could all the efforts of the pontiffs compel or induce the angry combatants to silence. The power and jurisdiction of the see of Rome—the subjects of the Catholic church—the nature, necessity, and efficacy of grace—the principles of morals—the operation of the sacraments—the best mode of Christian instruction—These, and many other points, were disputed with abundant acrimony.

The council of Trent made no alteration in rites and ceremonies. Many indeed desired a reformation in the grosser abuses; but this was touching priestcraft in a tender part. The papal legates and their party therefore warded off the blow. Idolatry, images, relics, frauds, maintained their ground. Indeed where the Protestants are still numerous, or their proximity makes more circumspection needful, the more offensive acts of idolatry, and the grosser frauds are avoided. But in the more enslaved countries of Romanism, in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and their colonies, there superstition still reigns triumphant, and fraud and folly appear without

out a blush. The blood of St. Januarius regularly liquefies ; and the milk of the Virgin is as fresh as if it had been just drawn from her breasts in Palestine.

The Bible was one of the forbidden books which the people might not consult without permission. And no man must comment on the Scriptures, even in private, in any way different from the language of the Church : nor print without a license. So truly is the key of knowledge reserved by the popes in their own custody. And wherever their imperious decrees are obeyed, the Holy Scriptures are a book sealed, and all divine knowledge confined to the miserable mass and breviary, and such wretched discourses as serve to fix the ignorance of divine things more inveterate, by inspiring confidence in their own deceived and deceiving spiritual guides.

It was ridiculous enough, that in this wise assembly, the *Vulgate*, the ancient Latin translation of the Bible then in use, though full of the grossest mistakes and deviations from the original, was consecrated for ever as the only *authentic and perfect* translation ; and withal it was determined, that this version should be *accurately revised and corrected*, and a *new edition* published by authority ; and this too *was never done* : so that the people were left in the strangest situation imaginable, and the

the teachers themselves in circumstances the most embarrassing : compelled to use as a consecrated translation, from which they may not depart, a version confessedly in need of correction ; and promised a new edition still more perfect, which was never taken in hand.

The state of pure religion, in a Church so corrupt, even in the fountain head itself, may easily be conceived : where all godliness consisted in implicit obedience to the holy see, and exact attention to the formularies of devotion, the performance of penance, and the purchase of indulgences. Yet we must not suppose, that the whole body was utterly destitute of the life of Christianity. Amidst all the prevailings of iniquity, and the servitude of superstition, the writings of some of those who were called *mystical divines*, shew, that they cultivated still the religion of the heart ; and however debased by prejudice and error, supposed the life of godliness to consist in a state of conscious favour and communion with God ; producing real purity of mind, and holiness of conversation. But it must be confessed, these were few and hidden : in silence and retirement, they avoided observation, and therefore escaped the charge of heresy, which would have certainly fastened upon them, if they had not been content to keep their religion to themselves.

Jesuitical

Jesuitical religion, inquisitorial religion, the established religion of popery, will allow us to look to such a religion with abhorrence only, and no hope.

We turn therefore to a more pleasing scene, the Church reformed from the abominations of popery; not but that we shall find therein much to lament, and much to condemn. Yet, there the living body subsisted of pure religion, and undefiled; therein we shall discover genuine Christianity; and though small, a seed that shall be to the Lord for a generation, the remnant according to the election of grace.

SECT. III.

ON THE CHURCH REFORMED FROM THE ERRORS
OF POPERY.

I AM entering on a subject, in which it is difficult to maintain that absolute impartiality which is so desirable; and not to be warped into misrepresentation by educational prejudices. To have a decided opinion in a matter so momentous, as regards the salvation of men's souls, is our duty, and highly approvable: but, though a Protestant, I will pledge myself intentionally not to deceive:

and will speak the truth as far as I know it, whether respecting Protestant or Papist, or the different denominations among ourselves, without hiding the blemishes of my own. I can truly aver, I seek simply truth, as it is revealed in the Bible: and I mean to embrace it in a profession open and undisguised, of whatever I find in the Scripture, respecting the doctrine or discipline of the true Church: and wherever I am mistaken in my representations, my ears are open to conviction, and my pen ready to correct unintentional errors.

The body of Protestants who separated from the Romish communion, may be comprised under three grand divisions. In each of these a variety of shades of difference in doctrine and discipline will be found. The *Lutheran*—the *Calvinist*—and the *Heterodox*—or such as departed from their brethren in those articles of faith, which both the others had laid down as fundamental, and essential to salvation.

1. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH.

THE great reformer, Luther, left his name, as the mark of union in that Church, which was in a peculiar manner indebted to his labours. We have seen its rise, through the intrepid opposition of an Augustin monk, to the papal abuses: the exclusion

sion of those who adhered to him from the Roman pale, by the excommunication of Leo X ; the vigorous struggle, till *the confession of Augsburg* ; when it began to grow into its present form ; its final emancipation from all pontifical authority ; and its legal independence established by the *pacification of Passau* ; and, lastly, by the *peace of Augsburg*.

The leading principle of the reformation is, that THE BIBLE ALONE CONTAINS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS, which every man is to read and consider ; and thence alone to draw all the articles of his faith and practice : and nothing is binding upon the conscience, but what is there clearly revealed, or necessarily deducible from the Scripture declarations. These are generally admitted principles ; but the Protestant Churches have severally differed in the application of some of them, and manifested a most blameable bigotry and severity towards their brethren, in enforcing their own interpretations of the Scripture ; and, that oftentimes, according to their own acknowledgments, in matters not essential to salvation.

To maintain nearer union of sentiment and worship among themselves, each Church has adopted particular confessions and formularies, which have

been laid down as necessary to communion with that body : and thus hath often contracted grievously the circle of exclusion respecting their brethren, who hold with them one head Christ, and one faith in all essential articles.

The Lutheran doctrine is avowed to be comprised in the *Augsburg Confession* ; and in Melancthon's *Apology* for it, in reply to the popish objections ; these are regarded as of first authority : though it must be confessed, some of the opinions respecting the real presence in the Eucharist, are far more objectionable, in the *Apology* than in the *Confession*. *The articles of Smalcald*, drawn up by Luther, with a view to heal, if possible, the disputes raised, have softened down some of the harsher expressions of the *Augsburg Confession* ; and with the *catechisms* of the great Master, are received in that Church as directorial. Whilst the *form of concord*, asserting the *ubiquity* of Christ's human body, and the *real presence* in the sacrament, with the brand of heresy, and the sentence of excommunication fixed upon all who did not receive these dogmas, though it was strongly maintained and supported by the more rigid Saxon divines of the Lutheran persuasion, was as warmly disputed, and rejected, by the more moderate.

The leading doctrines of the Augsbург Confession are, *the true and essential divinity of the Son of God* ;

His substitution and vicarious sacrifice ; and

The necessity, freedom, and efficacy, of divine grace upon the human heart.

Where God, the Son, is thus known, as a real Saviour to the uttermost ; and God the Spirit acknowledged in the experience of his influence on the conscience, why should any thing afterwards be permitted to break the bands of union between those who have been admitted to *friendship with God* ?

Respecting the government of the Church and its forms, it is admitted universally among the Lutherans, that the Supreme Ruler of the State, is the head of all authority, in what relates to causes ecclesiastical as well as civil ; and, that the Church is subject to the powers that are established : though no power has authority to alter the revealed word of God, or to impose upon the conscience arbitrarily its own dictates—consent, not constraint, must form Christian union. The forms therefore of religion to be observed, though generally such as had been before in the Church, were purged from superstition and error ; and these forms not so uniformly prescribed, but that some have retained rites,

which others have rejected without a breach of unity of spirit ; as they agree that indifferent things shall be left indifferent.

This is singularly evident in the mode of ecclesiastical government established in the Lutheran church. In Sweden it continues to be episcopal. In Norway the same. In Denmark, under the name of *superintendent*, all episcopal authority is retained. Whilst, through Germany, the superior power is vested in a *consistory*, over which there is a president, with a distinction of rank and privileges, and a subordination of inferior clergy to their superiors, different from the parity of Presbyterianism.

Though the same liturgical form is not every where observed, the leading features of worship are alike. The public service on the Lord's day is universal ; and occasional worship at other times. The holy Scriptures are every where read in the mother tongue—Prayer, without a liturgy, though after a directory, is offered to God in Christ—with praise in psalms and hymns—Sermons are regularly preached for general instruction—Catechising used for the rising generation—The Lord's supper is celebrated frequently, by all, who, after examination of the minister, are judged intelligent and admissible. The great transactions of our Lord
are

are commemorated at the usual seasons ; and some Lutheran churches observe festivals, which others have not admitted.

The article of church censures, so much abused and so much neglected, was by the Lutheran regulation lodged with the clergy and courts of their superintendence ; and in consequence of abuses on the one hand of this spiritual power, and contempt on the other of its censures, this branch of discipline is in a very degraded state : and the more corruption multiplies in manners, the less ability is there to restrain them. Indeed, in the Lutheran, as in the Anglican Church, the personal influence of a good example, and the zealous discharge of the ministerial office, will do more to awe offenders and revive discipline, than any sentences pronounced in spiritual courts. Perhaps the feeling complaints so often uttered of the want of all discipline, would be most effectually removed, if those who made them, set themselves more zealously and faithfully to warn the unruly, to instruct the ignorant, to restore the fallen ; and in preaching and living, to set forth the true apostolic doctrine and practice. Their rebukes would make the proudest tremble ; and the uniformity of their conversation give authority to their exhortations.

The Lutheran Church had, by the peace of Augsbourg, gained a first establishment; but the very contract which had secured its liberty, checked its progress; as no prelate, dignitary, or other ecclesiastic, could come over to this faith and worship, without the forfeiture of all his ecclesiastical preferment. To this the Archbishop of Cologne was obliged to submit; preferring a wife and Lutheranism to his archbishopric, which he was compelled to resign. However, the steadfast abettors of this faith, zealous for the truths they held, disappointed all the open and secret attacks of their adversaries, to bring them back to the house of their prison, and firmly stood their ground; producing a noble army of defendants, men of the highest eminence for literature, as well as zeal and devotedness to Christ. Among them, Melancthon, Carlostadt, Camerarius, Flaccus, and Chemnitz, deservedly hold the first places. By these, learning in all its branches was promoted and cultivated. The miserable scholastic theology was greatly exploded by Luther and his noble associates, from a conviction of its barren and unfruitful nature, and a more rational mode of investigation of the divine truths introduced, where the Bible, not Aristotle, prevailed. Yet they despised not the fair deductions of syllogistic reasoning, whilst they wished to banish the jargon of terms, and the subtilties of sophisms, which

which tended merely to puzzle, instead of elucidating the subject.

The *Theosophists*, disciples of Paracelsus, addicted to chymistry, and the solution of bodies into their first principles, with the most diligent experiments, joined enthusiastic ideas of inward illumination, as the means of arriving at discoveries, above the native reach of human faculties. Hoffman, and the famous Behman, were the leaders of this school. An air of singular piety and mystic devotion engaged a number of disciples; and names, highly respectable, are mentioned as favourers of them, such as Arntd and Wegelius.

As theological science was peculiarly pursued, many eminent expositors of Scripture appeared; none more revered than the great Reformer himself, from whose sentiments it is to be justly lamented that his disciples have so greatly departed: and whilst they honour him with such singular devotion, dispute the most explicit and characteristic doctrines of his theology; of which I have given a specimen from Luther's tract against Erasmus. I may quote an acknowledgment of this, from the translator of Mosheim, whether to the honour or disgrace of Lutheranism, let every impartial judge determine. "The doctrines of *absolute predestination, irresistible grace, and human impotence*, were
" never

“ never carried to a more excessive length, nor
“ maintained with a more virulent obstinacy, by
“ any divine than they were by Luther; but in
“ these times he has very few followers in this re-
“ spect, even among those who bear his name.”
Of whom Dr. Mosheim also says, “ That the doc-
“ trine of the Lutheran Church hath changed by
“ degrees its original form, and been improved and
“ perfected in many respects, especially in the doc-
“ trines of *free will, predestination, and other points,*
“ in which the Lutheran systems of divinity of an
“ earlier date are so far surpassed by those of mo-
“ dern times.” Perhaps theological doctors in this
matter may still differ, and prefer the *ancient truths*
to *modern improvements*; nor think the lengths, to
which Luther carried them, *excessive*, nor his de-
fence of them either *virulent* or *obstinate*. Certain
it is, that if there be any thing in Lutheranism pe-
culiarly excellent, they plead for it with a very bad
grace, who, in points of such importance, differ
from their leader, and impeach his wisdom and his
zeal in defence of what he at least esteemed of the
greatest consequence. If Bossuet and the papal
writers reproached them for their variations from
their great Reformer, who can dare to say, there
is not a cause?

The doctrine of *justification by faith alone*, had
never a clearer expositor than Luther; the plain
and

and literal sense of the Scripture he adhered to as to be always followed, in preference to all allegorical and fanciful interpretations; and his morals were as pure as his doctrines were evangelical. Nor can I by any means think, either Luther or Melancthon defective, as has been suggested, for not giving a *regular system of morality*, when, it is acknowledged, by those who presume to censure them, that they gave the fullest practical rules and instructions under the heads of the *law, sin, free will, faith, hope, and charity*. All other morals that spring not from these Christian principles, I presume they disclaimed and disdained.

Whatever faults men were pleased to find with Luther's doctrine on the points above mentioned, when he was dead, none murmured disapprobation among the host of his followers, whilst he was alive. In the nature of the Eucharist, Carlostadt had dared to differ from him, and to be in the right; in the rest they were unanimous. It must be admitted, that Luther was a sharp disputant, and hardly brooked opposition—that the summit of eminence, to which he was deservedly advanced, might make him jealous—or treat those who differed from him with too much asperity. He was a man of vehement spirit; the times were rude; and differences of opinion were not met with the candour and politeness of more modern days. I mean not this to
excuse

excuse what is condemnable, but as a caution not to judge him rashly, if his zeal at any time appears to overstep the bounds of temperance. He was a man, a sinful man, a man of like passions with other corrupted creatures; exposed to peculiar provocations, and of a temper naturally irascible. Let those who blame him avoid his mistakes, and imitate his excellences.

I have before spoken of his harsh treatment of Carlostadt, whom his interest with the Elector drove from his native land; and whatever was pretended as the cause, the real one may be found in their disputes about the Eucharist. The same difference of opinion produced his displeasure against Schwendkfeldt, a Saxon nobleman, of eminent piety and abilities, who inclining more to the simplicity of Zuinglius, and professing his opposition to the errors of Luther in this point of doctrine, experienced the same harsh treatment from his sovereign, and was driven into banishment.

AN. 1538. His dispute with his disciple Agricola, on the moral law and its obligations, respected a subject of more importance than the ideas of *real presence*. Carrying his views of the abolition of the Mosaical obligations, to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law, Agricola pleaded, that we were no longer under it, as our rule of obedience, but

but under the gospel, as a nobler dispensation of faith working by love. From this man the term *Antinomian* became applied to those who followed this idea; and some are said to have pushed the doctrine to the support of the most dissolute and immoral practices, as perfectly compatible with a state of union with Christ. But this certainly was not the case with Agricola, and many others, that have been charged with Antinomian principles; who, however they may speak disparagingly of the law, as binding Christian men, would disclaim the horrid conclusions which their adversaries have presumed to draw for them. Luther's vigilance and zeal engaged Agricola either to explain himself, or to retract what was erroneous in his positions, and he continued in his ministry.

But though Luther's personal weight aided by his vehemence, and supported by the Protestant princes, who so highly revered him, contributed to maintain an appearance of unity in the Lutheran Church, and to crush every attempt at innovation in the established opinions; yet no sooner were his eyes closed than it appeared evident, that in several points his dearest friends thought differently from him. The commanding authority, and warmth of Luther in a sort overawed the gentle, but most learned Melancthon. He would not start a subject of dispute: his spirit was yielding and conced-
ing

ing to a fault. No marvel he shunned the least opposition to his admired friend. When his master was taken from his head, and he became the leader of the Saxon ecclesiastical establishment, he would have purchased peace with Rome by tolerating, and submitting to, what Luther would have rejected with abhorrence. He could be even content to soften down the very doctrine which the great reformer placed as the criterion, *stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae*, of the true or apostate church; and to admit some modification of *justification by faith alone*, by abating something from man's absolute incapacity to promote his own conversion unto God, and allowing the necessity of good works for salvation. Though he had been silent on the controversy of the Eucharist, and before coincided with Luther; he latterly could not receive the strong ideas of *real presence*, suggested by his friend, but wished at least the definition might be left so ambiguous, as to admit those who adopted the opinion of *symbol only*, in the Eucharist, to friendly communion. No sooner had he therefore ventured to promulge openly, what he had before either suppressed or only modestly hinted, than the rigid Lutherans rose in arms against him. And those disturbances began, which to a man of his temper and feeling must have been peculiarly painful.

The

The first grand occasion of division in the Lutheran Church, arose from the reference made to Melancthon and other Saxon divines, on the subject of the imperial decree, called *the Interim*, and how far they could submit to it. His pacific spirit counting no sacrifices too great for peace, persuaded acquiescence in all matters of *indifference*, to the Emperor's edict. But in these indifferent matters, he reckoned doctrines of deep and essential consequence, in the eyes of Luther and his true followers, particularly in the *article of justification*. And as yielding was he respecting *ceremonies* and *papal jurisdiction*; which the great reformer would have spurned with abhorrence. No wonder therefore that Luther's most zealous disciples, with the learned Flaccus at their head, charged these accommodating divines with betrayal of the truth, and with apostacy from the vital principle of Lutheranism.

A sharp controversy therefore arose, concerning what could be called *indifferent*; and what ought, or ought not, to be yielded to Rome. This naturally led to points of the first consequence, respecting faith—good works—the prevention of grace—the co-operation of the human will—in all which Melancthon expressed himself in a language that Luther would have rejected with indignation. Since nothing could be farther from his sentiments
than

than modification on any of these subjects, respecting which he had declared himself in the most explicit manner. Nor would Melancthon's explication, that the *impressions of grace were accompanied with certain correspondent actions of the human-will*, have been borne for a moment by the great master : and if not branded as absolutely heretical, by Flaccus, and his adherents, at least they exposed Melancthon and his followers to heavy charges of semi-pelagianism : to which no doubt such modes of expression led. They excited also just apprehensions, that even more was intended than expressed, under such unknown terms, in the nomenclature of Lutheran orthodoxy.

AN. 1557. Flaccus, the chief, in that amazing work of ecclesiastical learning, "the Magdeburg "Centuriators," was advanced to the chair of divinity of Jena, by the zealous Lutheran sons of the deprived elector John, who had formed this seminary, with a view to maintain inviolate the pure doctrines of the great reformer. This gave him scope, as it more immediately called him to defend the master, and to attack his opposers. Thus the breach widened, and a schism was apprehended between the free-grace, and the semi-pelagian Lutherans.

AN.

AN. 1560. Strigelius, the disciple of Melancthon, maintained at Jena, in opposition to Flaccus, the freewill doctrine, and man's co-operation in conversion. For this he was accused by the professor to the duke, imprisoned and compelled to recant; or at least appear to do so, in order to obtain his discharge. It is grievous to observe, that the true Protestant principles were so little followed; and each side courted the arm of civil power to aid the force on their arguments. I wave entering on other controversies of less important subjects, which disturbed the peace of the Lutheran Church, and were sure to give occasion of triumph and reproach to their popish adversaries.

During the life of Melancthon, the contest raged; nor was it quieted by his decease. His son-in-law Peucer, a man as respectable for his learning, as eminent for piety, a professor at Wittenberg, had formed a considerable party among the Saxon divines, who adopted with
AN. 1571. him the sentiments of Zuinglius, respecting the Eucharist, in preference to those of Luther; and to which Melancthon in his latter years acceded. These they wished to introduce into the Saxon church; and to alter the established doctrine of *the real presence*. A solemn convocation of divines was held at Dresden on the subject; and a formula of agreement drawn up,
VOL. II. H h favourable

AN. 1571. favourable to the friends of Peucer, and denying the ubiquity of Christ's human body. At this the rigid Lutherans fired, and gaining the elector, under the dreaded apprehensions, that the foundations of Lutheranism were ready to be overturned, a new convention at Torgaw, established the *real presence*, and

AN. 1574. instigated the elector to seize, imprison, and banish, all the secret Calvinists; and to reduce their followers by every act of violence, to renounce their sentiments, and confess the *ubiquity*. Ten years did the oppressed Peucer suffer imprisonment, in the severest manner, for his opinions: and proved, that persecution was not peculiar to popish ecclesiastics. Effectually to eradicate this dreaded innovation, and drive from Saxony and the Lutheran pale, all who inclined to the Helvetic opinion respecting Christ's body in the sacrament, the same divines who had drawn up the *decrees of Torgaw*, produced the *form of concord*,

AN. 1577. in which, the *real manducation* of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist was established, and heresy and excommunication laid on all who refused this, as an article of faith; with pains and penalties to be enforced by the secular arm. The bigotted Saxon established this *form of concord*, through the extent of his authority; and many other Lutheran churches adopted it. But what was pretended as a means of terminating this controversy

controversy, produced more violent dissensions than ever. All the calvinistic, or reformed party, lifted up their voices against such a decision, not only as unscriptural in itself, but as tending in the strongest manner to preclude all Christian union between real Protestants. The favourers of the Zuinglian notions of the Eucharist, felt the severity of the edicts. The moderate Lutherans themselves abhorred such hasty censures. The friends and disciples of the amiable Melancthon could not bear to see his sentiments thus treated: and from a variety of motives, the *form of concord* was rejected by a considerable, if not the larger part of the Lutheran Church. Nor in Saxony itself was there wanting a vast number, who though compelled to suppress their opinions, waited only the favourable moment to shew themselves. This the

AN. 1586. death of the elector Augustus afforded, and his successor being more favourable

to the moderate Lutherans, they attempted to suppress the *form of concord*, and *Crellius*, the first minister being on their side, they prepared the people for the change they meditated, by lesser alterations, such as the omission of *exorcism* which had been used in baptism; by a *catechism*, favourable to the Calvinistic opinions; and by a *new edition of the Bible*. But the rigid Lutherans, exactly like our *High church and Sacheverel for ever*, caught fire at

these unhallowed changes, making the nation think the Church in danger; and the clergy, inflaming the populace, produced much tumult, and sharp interference of the magistracy. The
AN. 1591. tables turned on the death of the elector Christian I. The rigid Lutherans resumed their empire, and their adversaries were imprisoned and banished. The *form of concord* was restored to its vigour, and the unhappy Crellius, who had been the great support of the party, put to death. On such juridical execution
AN. 1601. of Protestants by Protestants, originating in disputes, about religious opinions, if I could, I would fix a brand of reprobacy; and lift up my feeble voice against persecution of every kind. But I am conscious, whilst men are as they are, church power will always be abused, and unchristian intolerance wish to kindle the flames against all who may venture to differ from the dominant party. Indeed the most unlike the great Head of the Church are they, who thrust themselves into high places; and whose pride and insolence are gratified in trampling upon their brethren. Ye followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, mark the man, that hates and injures his brother for his opinions: he is a murderer, in whatever church he is found.

The

The doctrines of Luther, on predestination and grace, were too uncongenial to the pride and wisdom of the unhumiliated heart, not to excite strong opposition. Huber, of Wittenberg, distinguished himself in defence of the plan of *universal redemption*, which has been since generally adopted in the Lutheran Church, but in those purer days of evangelical doctrine, provoked just indignation, and occasioned his deposition and banishment. Violence on all sides was carried to the extreme. The man who subscribes an established doctrine justly forfeits his advantages, when he renounces the ground of his tenure : but let him live as free as his brethren, and defend his sentiments in love, and in the spirit of meekness. The misery is, that in all these unhappy disputes, human passions rage, instead of the simple pursuit of truth and godliness.

To conclude ; in the Lutheran Church were found men *great* in every view ; in erudition and piety. But as must be the case universally, the multitude were only believers in the lump. The generality of clergy in every established church, enter it as a profession ; and are too like their fellows in all worldly pursuits, and human passions. The faithful and really godly are every where comparatively few, who serve the Lord Christ out of a pure heart fervently, and regard their work as their wages. I doubt not the living members of Christ's

body, within the Lutheran pale, in that day were many and glorious. At the first dawn of reformation, strict piety was more universally cultivated among the professors: but declensions early crept in with a peaceable establishment; and when no longer under the cross, the departure from truth and purity, presently appeared. Before the close of the century, Mosheim acknowledges, that, “the manners of the Lutherans were remarkably depraved—that multitudes offended the public, by audacious irregularities—that discipline vanished, either through the carelessness or impotence of the clerical arm.” And those who distinguished themselves from their brethren, by greater zeal, purity of doctrine, deadness to the world, heavenly-mindedness, and spirituality of conversation, were marked, and gained a name of peculiarity, that separated them from their fellows, content to bear a testimony, by their lives and labours, to a kingdom neither Lutheran nor Calvinist exclusively, but consisting in righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; the true Spirit of the Church universal, which is neither of Paul, nor of Apollos, but of Christ.

II. OF THE CHURCHES CALLED REFORMED, OR CALVINISTIC.

THE name of *Protestants*, equally applied to all dissenters from the church of Rome. As these separated into different communities, they were distinguished by different denominations; the term *reformed church* was therefore appropriated to those who, differing from the Lutheran opinions in points of doctrine or discipline, preferred, especially in the great articles respecting the real presence in the Eucharist, the doctrine of Zuinglius and Calvin to Luther. And as Calvin was the most eminent, the several churches who adopted his sentiments, generally bore his name, as the Lutherans that of their great reformer. Not that Luther or Calvin pretended to support any doctrines, but what they deduced from the Scriptures, and confirmed by the evidence of the fathers, especially Augustin. The Calvinistic churches, though united in the confession of the same fundamental articles of faith, in which indeed, the only union essential is to be sought, were formed on very different models; and chiefly followed the several forms of government, which subsisted in the countries where the reformation prevailed, and the different views which the rulers in different nations entertained of the most

scriptural church order. For from the New Testament and the apostolic precedents, all professed to derive their several establishments. The greater body adopted the model of the Helvetic churches, and especially of Geneva, where Calvin presided, and had a chief influence over all those of the reformed profession. Switzerland, Germany, France, Scotland, Holland, and all the foreign Calvinistic churches erected the form of government called *Presbyterian*, in which a parity of rank was established among the ministers themselves; a *synodical* government, consisting of clergy and laity, elected to manage the concerns of the particular churches; and a general assembly of the whole church to decide on momentous cases, in each of their several dominions or districts. Yet this establishment was not exactly similar in any two churches, who held the same confession of faith, and maintained in the general outline, the same form of discipline and government.

The churches of England and Ireland chose to retain *episcopacy* in their government, as in their apprehension more congenial with monarchical government, and primitive practice; whilst in all the great articles of faith, they held with their foreign brethren, and maintained communion with them. This Church formed a body, resembling the state, sitting in two houses of convocation, under the
same

same head, where all the great concerns ecclesiastical were to be settled, with the consent of the monarch.

In ceremonies, the reformed churches differed greatly. The first and great reformer Zuinglius, who began before Luther, his bold attack of popery, carried his reform far beyond him. Whilst Luther tolerated images, tapers, altars, exorcism, and auricular confession, *he* swept all the trappings of superstition away; reducing the worship to the standard of utmost simplicity, divested alike of garb or ornament. The other churches have admitted some ceremonies; the episcopal churches the most, as more conformed to the dignity of the hierarchy. The spirit of devotion hardly needs the adventitious helps which formality supposes important. Yet who will refuse his approbation of whatever may have a real tendency to enliven the worship, or engage the attention? Such surely will music be found, when under proper regulation.

Zurich, the cradle of the reformed, professed in the article of the Lord's Supper, the simple acknowledgment of its being a *sign* and nothing more, according to the opinion of Zuinglius, and his excellent and able associate *Æcolampadius*. Herein the Lutherans were at too great a distance to approach, and all efforts of conciliation proved abortive. As
this

this was a matter of first concern in that day, it may be useful to observe the gradations of opinion on this subject, among the churches.

ZUINGLIUS and his followers regarded the Eucharist as a mere *sign* or *symbol*, of which all professing Christians, whether regenerate, or unregenerate, might partake alike.

CALVIN supposed the *sign* or *symbol* to convey a sacramental pledge of blessing, and that a *spiritual presence* of Christ attended it to the regenerate and believing only ; whilst to others the elements remained as common food : and this the Church of England adopted.

LUTHER maintained, that the elements remained still bread and wine, but that a *real presence of Christ united with them*, in virtue of the ubiquity of his supposed human nature, and a *real manducation of Christ's body* followed ; this was termed *consubstantiation*.

THE POPIISH DOCTORS, contented for a *real transmutation* of the elements, which, under the *form* of bread and wine, *lost their nature and substance*, after consecration, and were actually changed into the very body and blood of Christ, by *transubstantiation*.

AN.

AN. 1531. ZUINGLIUS fell in battle, attending with his exhortations his countrymen, as was the duty of his office. With this his adversaries presumed to upbraid him, and insult his memory, however undeserving reproach. The triumph of the popish bigot, Sir Thomas More, speaks what spirit he was of: but his loss was more than repaired in Calvin, who soon after took the lead at Geneva, and was regarded as the patriarch of the reformed churches. His learning, piety and zeal, attracted from all countries students to Geneva, now become a kind of seminary to the reformed churches, as Wittemberg had been to the Lutheran; and from thence they issued forth, to spread the opinions, and to recommend the model of their admired teacher. Hence a band of union was formed through England, Holland, Germany, France, and Switzerland, by similarity of studies, and uniformity in opinion, respecting the grand theological tenets; regarding as a matter of more indifference the system of government and discipline which each formed for themselves.

Luther had given the civil magistrate the supreme power in ecclesiastical regulations, and Zuinglius had therein concurred with him; yet, whilst he made the clergy dependent on the civil government, he admitted a difference of rank, and appointed

appointed a superintendant over the clergy of his canton.

Calvin maintained the independence of the Church on the magistrate, as competent to form its own government and regulations, in synods and consistories, under the protecting power of the civil ruler, with perfect parity among the presbyters.

The Church of England steered a middle course. All supremacy of legal dominion being in the King, and the two houses of parliament. Their decisions only constitute law. But the clergy in convocation, with the consent of the monarch, may form regulations binding on their own body, as the bye-laws of a corporation, though not universally obligatory. For a long while past this convocation hath ceased to meet for ecclesiastical affairs; at least they only meet and adjourn, without proceeding to any business.

France, Holland, and Scotland, with Geneva, adopted the government which Calvin recommended. The Swiss persevered in that established by Zuinglius; and the churches of England and Ireland pursued with episcopacy a mixed regulation, subordinate to the parliamentary supremacy.

But

But the great point which distinguished this leader of the reformed churches, respected *the decrees* of God, and their consequences on the everlasting state of men, as flowing from his own sovereign pleasure and will. Nothing that Calvin advanced spoke stronger than Luther had previously maintained on the subject of predestination and grace; the impotence of the human will to good; and the utter corruption of our fallen nature. But after his decease, the Lutherans in general departed from the tenets of their great reformer, to the semi-pelagian system of *co-operation*. Against this, the Genevan apostle, ably seconded by his colleagues, Beza, Zanchius, and others, strongly contended and supported the system, since called the Calvinistic, with such force of argument, that it was universally adopted through all the reformed churches, and became their discriminating feature; and must continue so, as long as the Helvetic confession, the catechism of Heidelberg, the decisions of the synod of Dort, the assembly's catechism, and the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England continue unrepealed. For, whatever change of sentiments may have been wrought at Geneva, in France, Holland, Germany, or Great Britain; whilst these formularies continue the express bonds of union in the several churches, in which none can enter into holy orders, but by their solemn consent and approbation to the truths
which

which these formulas of doctrine contain, so long whatever difference of sentiment may be entertained by individuals, ministers, or others, the majority or minority, none can be inferred in *the Church*, which remains for ever such, as the articles of her faith declare.

The disputes occasioned by the opposition raised to these predestinarian sentiments, form a principal part of the history of the reformed churches; as in each of them they were attacked by men of the greatest acuteness and learning; and, as they present a revolting aspect in the view of every unhumbled conscience, and unenlightened mind, it was impossible, humanly speaking, but those very consequences should result, which we are about shortly to detail; and which are equally singular and observable; to wit—That for a long while past the majority of teachers and people in all the reformed churches have been departing farther and farther from the free grace and predestinarian system; and yet the original establishment of these doctrines, in their several formularies and confessions of faith, remains exactly as they were fixed from the beginning.

Switzerland, divided between Popish and Protestant cantons, hath continued since the days of Calvin, the same formula of doctrine and discipline.

France united herself with Geneva and her venerable fathers, Farel and Beza ; who, after Calvin's decease, spread the truths he taught with equal zeal and success ; but that unhappy country, torn with civil and religious feuds, suffered severely. The party of the reformed, and the Catholics, were not very unequally balanced, though the preponderance rested with the latter. Yet the Huguenots, a name given to the French Protestants, were numerous even at court, and among the principal personages of the kingdom. The

dreadful massacre of the Protestants on AN. 1572. St. Bartholemew's day, which every tongue has execrated, kindled afresh the fires of dissention, hardly extinguished ; and through seas of blood, Henry of Navarre, the heir of the throne, contended for his birth-right against his popish and inveterate enemies. The great obstruction was his profession of the reformed religion. Honour long maintained the struggle, for conscience with such a man could have presented a feeble barrier. A change of religion seated him at last peaceably on the throne. Henry the Fourth, surnamed *the Great*, was a man of intrepid valour, a consummate politician, and in his general manners esteemed as the most amiable of men ; withal professedly a zealous Protestant ; but, at the same time, the slave of appetite, and indulging his passions in such impurity and licentiousness, as disgraced

graced the name of Christian. It little signified, indeed, to what church he belonged. His politic apostacy procured peace for the body which he deserted, as well as the throne for himself; and the edict of Nantz confirmed to the reformed the most ample toleration, with free admission to all places of honour and profit; and chambers of justice, where they enjoyed an equal number of assessors of their own profession. A third part of the kingdom at least had then embraced the reformed religion. AN. 1598.

AN. 1560. Knox, the famous Scotch reformer, and pupil of Calvin, brought from Geneva the reformed sentiments and discipline, and after furious struggles established them through Scotland.

England had long been preparing, before Luther or Calvin arose, for a reform; and when first the separation was formed from the see of Rome, was in peculiar circumstances. During the life of Henry the Eighth, a man of violence, lawless in appetite, and destitute of all religion, England, as a body, could not be properly said to have had any religious sentiments, or church established, when the despotic will of the monarch made what alterations he pleased, and sent to the flames, or the scaffold, those who dared to question his supremacy, or to controvert his decisions. Cranmer, the friend of Calvin,

Calvin, and in opinion one with him, respecting doctrines, was high in the favour of this capricious and cruel monarch. By improving every offered occasion, and yielding, where he found opposition useless, though often exposed to the most imminent ruin, he endeavoured to avert all the evil, and do all the good which was in his power. But

no sooner had death removed the tyrant, and placed the amiable Edward

on the throne, than the whole ecclesiastical establishment was modelled according to the reformed system, leaving the bishops, and the discipline of the Church, nearly as they had been before. The abuses of popery were all removed, or at least it was designed they should be; and England became a capital member of the reformed Church. The excellent Peter Martyr, the intimate friend of Calvin, was invited over, and seated in the professor's chair at Oxford; and both universities maintained with zealous attachment the doctrines termed Calvinistic, and which the thirty-nine articles confirmed, as the established profession of the kingdom. Geneva was avowed a sister Church, united in doctrine, though different in government and discipline: and herein, by an express declaration of Calvin, bound to exercise mutual indulgence. This flourishing period continued

AN. 1553. till the reign of Mary; when many eminent ministers being martyred, the rest

who escaped her bloody bishops, dispersed and fled into the foreign Protestant churches, and were received at Geneva with the most fraternal hospitality.

When divine Providence, on the demise
AN. 1558. of Mary, placed Elizabeth on the throne,
these persecuted exiles returned to the land of their nativity, restored to their charges, and exercising their ministry in the Church, from which they had been expelled : but, during their absence, their habits of intimacy and acquaintance with Geneva and her divines, as well as of the other reformed churches, had raised scruples in their minds respecting the lawfulness of many rites continued in the Church of England ; and a wish to reduce that establishment to a conformity with the greater simplicity of the foreign reformed churches. The body of the dignified clergy was against the exiles : many had conformed from popery, and wished to keep as near as possible to the Church which they had renounced, in hopes of another change : but above all, the imperious Elizabeth, who had inherited an abundant portion of her father's tyrannical spirit, held her supremacy with a jealous tenacity, and set her face against all innovations ; and though both her interest and inclination seemed to concur with her education, and to make her a determined Protestant, yet she had no objection to the exterior pomp of worship, and rather appeared willing to enlarge than curtail
the

the ritual ceremonies. Nor did the strict and rigid manners of the exiles at all appear congenial to her spirit, which, with all her apparent zeal for the outward profession of the Protestant religion, seemed totally destitute of the power of it, in her conscience and her conduct. Her imperious temper ; her feminine vanity ; her duplicity and cruelty to the Queen of Scots ; her profane swearing ; and a multitude of acts utterly inconsistent with the purity and gentleness of the religion of the Son of God, might be consistent with the character of a great Queen, but utterly incompatible with that of a good Christian.

Far from conceding any thing to the wishes of those who began to obtain the name of *Puritan*, from the *purser worship* and *manners* which they professed to seek, the Queen published the *Act of Uniformity*, and enforced it with all the rigour of her authority. The Puritans exasperated by a treatment, which, after their long and eminent sufferings, they thought they so little deserved, and so little expected, abstained not from sharp and bitter invectives against their oppressors ; and their obstinacy and their scrupulosity were often as extreme, as the insolence and intolerance of their adversaries were blameable. The best, the gentlest, the most peaceable on both sides, were little heard amidst the passions of heated opponents : neither

party was disposed to yield ; and the breach daily widened. The refusal to grant a liberal toleration, and the determination to suppress the murmurs of the discontented, by the strong hand of power, rendered them only more inimical to government, and united among themselves ; which otherwise they would not have been : for, whilst the most violent laboured to overturn the whole ecclesiastical establishment, and to reduce it to their favourite Genevan model, the more moderate would have gladly accepted a few concessions, removing the most obnoxious grounds of their objection to the forms established ; of which the article of vestments, the sign of the cross in baptism, and some similar rites, made a formidable part : for, as to *the doctrines*, they were perfectly consentient, and equally tenacious of them, perhaps more so than their adversaries. Nor were they as averse to the name of bishop or his superintendence, as to the pomp, and wealth, and political engagements of the prelacy : for as yet the English bishops claimed not their office by *divine right*, but *under the constitution of their country* ; nor pleaded for more than two orders of apostolic appointment, bishops and deacons. (See Burnet Reform. vol. 1. p. 324.)

AN. 1588. Bishop Bancroft widened the breach, by asserting in a sermon, preached at Paul's Cross, that bishops were a distinct order from priests, and
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that by *divine right*; and Archbishop Whitgift supported the assertion.

This tended farther to irritate, as the archbishop and his associates refused to consider any as invested with the ministerial character, who were not episcopally ordained; and demanded of those, who had been set apart in the other reformed churches, to be re-ordained before they were permitted to minister in the Church of England: as if there could be no ministers, no sacraments, no ordinances, no church, without bishops, priests, and deacons of episcopal ordination: and this as much offended the whole body of the reformed churches abroad, as it justly irritated the Puritans at home.

The cathedrals, their worship, and pomp, were peculiarly obnoxious to the Puritans, as were the dignitaries that occupied the stalls in them: and as they desired to banish the pageantry of devotion, they also wished a greater purity of discipline; and that all who were open offenders, or of dubious character, should be excluded from the communion of the faithful: but that such exclusion from the table of the Lord, should not expose them to any civil or worldly incommodity, in reputation, person, or estate.

The high commission court, and its arbitrary inquisitorial proceedings were strongly and justly objected to : but such an engine was too congenial to the despotic temper of the monarch, not to be sure to meet her strenuous support.

Thus began those troubles in the Church, the fearful effects of which, the next generation peculiarly experienced : where each equally blameable in their turn, abused their power in persecution ; and instead of liberty of conscience, and generous toleration, smote with the sword of the civil magistrate, all that refused to conform to their several exclusive establishments.

The conflicts of the contending parties I mean not to dwell upon. I can only just notice, that among the Puritans themselves, though united against the Church, much disunion prevailed : while some would be content with less, and others claimed more reforms, a variety of sects commenced in embryo, which a future age hatched into life. Of these I shall only notice that denomination of dissenters which now first began to appear, and afterwards becoming so dominant under the protectorate, declined at the restoration, but at present seems greatly reviving.

AN. 1581. *The Independents* trace their most distinguished origin to Robert Brown, a man of abilities, who affected to form a purer church, on the apostolic model, than had yet existed. He consented to all the Calvinistic doctrines, alike at that day admitted by churchmen and Puritans; but in ecclesiastical government, he suggested a new plan of *congregational churches*, of which antiquity had furnished no precedent, at least since the apostolic age: each separate and distinct—consisting of those only who worshipped in the same place—exempt from all jurisdiction but of themselves—electing their own pastors—and dismissing them by the vote of a majority of members—admitting and expelling from their society in the same mode. Their *pastor* was distinguished neither by garb nor superiority from the rest; except his leading the devotions, ministering the sacraments, and addressing the congregation by appointment of the people. They permitted him not to minister baptism, or the communion, except to those of his own society; yet did they not restrict the office of *teacher* to one, but admitted any member who offered and was approved by the church, to exhort and edify their brethren: withal highly intolerant, they refused all communion with every other society of Christians, formed upon a different model from their own. In many of these points the independents have been since more enlarged

and liberal. Brown, after flying his country for his opposition to the governing powers, and attempting to form churches on the independent model in the Dutch provinces, returned to England, conformed to the church established; and is said to have finished his latter days at Achurch, in Northamptonshire, in a manner disgraceful to any church. A part of one of the congregations which he quitted at Leyden, transported themselves to America, and founded at Boston the first independent society on that Continent.

Yet, amidst these disputes and contentions, respecting the forms of religion, a great and glorious number of living evidences of pure Christianity appeared. Many of the writings which have reached us, witness the excellence of their authors: and the exemplariness of their conduct, and their zeal for their adorable Master's service, demonstrate, that the reformed churches in this land were then a praise in the earth. It is much to be lamented, that a greater spirit of meekness and mutual forbearance was not exercised by men, who, professing to unite in all the divine doctrines, and the holy influence of them, put an importance upon the ceremonials of religion, to which they seem so little intitled. The one side too intolerant and tenacious of authority, not disposed to admit reasonable claims, or to indulge conscientious scruples: the

the other, stiff and unbending, dissatisfied with any concessions or alterations, which came not up to the extent of their requisitions; and charging many of the bishops as tyrannical and anti-christian, who certainly meant to be neither; and will, by all impartial posterity, be reckoned among the excellent of the earth. The great Head of the Church hath long since judged both parties, and I doubt not, they are together praising him, who pitieth our infirmities, and pardoneth our iniquities. Certain it is, that many of the bishops of that day were laborious pastors, and edified the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers, by their examples and preaching, as they did the whole church by their writings; and it is as certain, that many of those who dared not conform to the establishment, were ministers equally pious, learned, and exemplary, adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour by the purity of their lives, and greatly edified the little flocks which had been collected by their labours: and notwithstanding the weight of authority against them, they continued rising in public estimation, and increasing the numbers of the dissatisfied. These were of two sorts, *State Puritans*, who wished to introduce a greater measure of civil liberty into the government, and were the *political chiefs*, who watched their opportunity to turn the discontents of their brethren to the accomplishment of their own

own designs. The others were *Church Puritans*, who desired no alterations in government, and would have acquiesced in the ecclesiastical establishment with some modifications, but wished a reduction of unnecessary ceremonies, and to separate the Church from political connections with State; so as to be less a worldly sanctuary, as to them it appeared. It was something observable, that the men among the conformists themselves, who neither objected to the forms or the government of the church, if they manifested peculiar zeal in preaching; strictness of manners; and abstained from the theatre, and what the world calls the innocent amusements of life; they also received the brand of Puritanism, a circumstance highly favourable to the non-conforming party, as impressing an idea, that with them the greatest spirituality of conduct, and the power of godliness, was to be found; since all who shewed the most of this in their conversation, bore their reproach.

The holy lives, and the triumphant deaths of many of the men of that generation, are on record. Their flourishing congregations, and the attention paid to the ministry of those most faithful labourers, shew a relish for the truths which they preached; and a desire to be followers of such as through faith and patience inherited the promises. I hear them often branded as hypocrites, and

and their piety interpreted as outrageous and enthusiastic ; but I am not at all satisfied, that those from whom the reproaches of this sort come, are the best judges of evangelical truth, or the noblest patterns of christian conversation. There were, no doubt, many hypocrites, and such as, under the cloak of religious appearance, had political ends in view ; but this will be only a farther proof of the fact, that a life of exemplary godliness was common, and highly respected ; and therefore demonstrates a general spread of * *vital religion* among us, in that day.

The UNITED PROVINCES, rescued from the tyrannical dominion of Philip, as well as emancipated from the Romish yoke, by many a hard-fought battle, and persevering courage, began to breathe in established liberty, which defied the impotent malice of their enemies. The AN. 1579. furnace of affliction always brightens the Church of God. A great and faithful host of preachers of the everlasting gospel arose, and the bands of religion strengthened them for every conflict. A golden god, and the spirit of

* I venture to use this phraseology, however much it hath been derided by infidels and scoffers ; and I do it on purpose to express my views of *true Christianity*, as a divine principle of life, implanted by the Spirit of God.

commerce,

commerce, with the wealth it produces, had not as yet extended its baneful influence over the men of that generation. They had started in the race vigorously ; and adopting the reformed system of doctrine, adorned it by a purity, sobriety, and temperance, that was distinguishing.

A great number of the Bohemian and Moravian brethren, joined by the persecuted followers of Hufs, and driven by the Catholic clergy into Poland, united with the reformed churches. They had at first connected themselves with Luther and his associates, to whom they sent their confession of faith and discipline, and were not AN. 1522. disapproved, though in many things different from the Lutheran. But when they were expelled Bohemia, retaining their own discipline, they adopted the Calvinistic doctrine. I apprehend a branch still remained in Moravia, and Bohemia, united with the Lutherans, from whom the present Moravian brethren are descended ; who, in doctrine, approach much nearer the Lutheran confession than the Helvetic, though in their church government they have retained episcopacy, and peculiarities very distinguishing. If their ancestors were as excellent as many of that denomination in the present day, we must reckon them among the living members of the real Church of the redeemed.

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The Poles, from them, and other Germans, received the true evangelical religion; and Bohemians, Lutherans, and Swifs, confederated to defend themselves; exercising towards each other mutual indulgence, and bearing the name of *united brethren*.

Many of the German principalities, Hanau, Nassau, Isengberg, and others, towards the end of this century, joined the reformed churches; and the progress of Calvinism in Denmark was considerable, though the dominant religion continued Lutheran.

It may not be improper to close the account of the reformed Church, with some strictures on the character of that eminent personage, who was so highly distinguished in his day, and has ministered so much matter of admiration to his friends, and obloquy to his enemies.

CALVIN was a native of Noyon, in Picardy: his mental powers were great; his diligence indefatigable; his erudition equal to the first of that age; his eloquence was manly; his style perspicuous, and admirably pure; as a minister of the sanctuary, as a professor of divinity, his labours were immense. Yet, in the zenith of his power, his income amounted only to twenty-five pounds a-year; and he

He refused the increase of stipend which was offered him by the magistracy, chusing rather to give an example of disinterestedness to his successors. His morals were strictly exemplary ; his piety fervent ; his zeal against offenders in doctrine, or manners, rigid. He had much opposition to encounter, but he subdued it, by persevering ardor, and dignity of conduct. His influence at Geneva was vast, and he was looked up to by the reformed in general, as their oracle. Every where his name was mentioned with reverence. Tenacious in point of doctrine, he met an host of opponents, who rejected the system of unconditional decrees. Controversy sharpened his spirit, and he is accused of abusing his power and influence in acts of oppression towards his adversaries. The sufferings of Gruet, Bolfac, Castalio, Ochinus, but particularly of the ever remembered Servetus, put to death by the Genevan magistrates, for his socinian and infidel opinions, have brought an odium on Calvin's name, as having instigated them to such acts of violence ; at least not having exerted the authority which he was known to possess, to prevent the shedding of blood : and if this were a just charge, let the reproach rest upon him.

However dangerous such opinions may be supposed to the peace of society, or the souls of men, many now doubt the right of any penal inflictions
for

for them ; and much more the justice of putting any man to death on that account, however impious or atheistical he may be. But, in truth, the rights of conscience were as little understood in that day among the Protestants as among the Papists ; and obstinate heresy, or daring blasphemy, supposed to deserve the most condign punishment, and adjudged to prison, and to death.

Far from attempting to justify these severities, I esteem this as the foulest blot in Calvin's otherwise fair escutcheon ; nor do I think the spirit of the times any exculpation for violating the plainest dictates of the word of God and common sense, that " liberty of conscience and private judgment, " are every man's birth-right : " and where nothing immoral, or tending by some overt act to disturb the peace of society appears, there all punishment for matters of opinion must be utterly unchristian, and unjustifiable.

Calvin's advice to the English Puritans, respecting conformity, was singularly conciliatory. He wished them in all matters of indifference to submit ; and where they could not, to give as little offence as possible. Supposing with the wisest part of the reformed Church, that " Jesus Christ having " left no express directions respecting ecclesiastical
" govern-

“government, every nation might establish the
“form most agreeable to itself, provided nothing
“was enjoined contrary to the word of God.”
That he was a great man, his enemies will not
deny—that he was a good man, they who knew
him best bore the most unimpeachable witness:—
and what none dare dispute, those who were the
most distinguished in every Protestant country, for
learning and piety, courted his acquaintance, and
gloried in his friendship; than which, perhaps, a
more unequivocal proof cannot be produced of hu-
man excellence.

The reformed Church exhibited a constellation
of worthies, many of whom have been mentioned,
and more are omitted, whose writings demonstrate
their deep erudition, and theological knowledge;
and, who are still consulted for their critical skill,
as well as for practical improvement. Their sys-
tem was to open the word of God, as the fountain
of wisdom, admitting nothing to be taught, as di-
vine truth, but what was clearly deducible from
thence; avoiding all far-fetched interpretations,
and scholastic subtleties. And on this basis of
the pure word of God alone, have the reformed
churches been erected; and amidst the deplorable
apostacy from all religion, subsist in vigour to the
present day.

III. THE HETERODOX CHURCH.

A third body of Protestants, who are formed into Church order, and profess Christianity, I have ventured without meaning any reproach, to class under the title of HETERODOX; as they differed so essentially and fundamentally from the rest of the reformed. These rose up under several names and forms; to the chief of which I shall shortly advert, and their history.

It was hardly possible, when the spirit of reformation after years of darkness invited to the perusal of the Scriptures, and to the most unlimited freedom of enquiry into their contents, that a diversity of sentiments should not arise among the learned; from whom, and their conceit of superior intelligence, all heresies have usually commenced. Of the multitudes therefore of those, who rose up in opposition to the popish abuses, some pushed their objections even to the Bible itself; and rejected, as we have seen, revelation, and the very being of a God. The old heresies of Arian and Pelagian origin, revived; and various shades of degradation of Christ's divinity, brought him down from essential godhead, to the lowest state of humanity, in the system called SOCINIANISM: unless we shall admit the modern Unitarians to a lower step; who with the *Davidists*, a sect in Transylvania, refused every

address, or honour of mediation, to Jesus Christ. Indeed the gradations scarcely deserve consideration, as the difference between the true God and no God is such, as hardly to admit of any thing intermediate. This sect appears to derive its origin from Italy; and its name from Faustus Socinus; and to have spread among a few individuals of considerable literature; but not to have been moulded into form, and an establishment, till it visited Poland; where, after some vicissitudes, the city of Racow, in the palatinate of Sendomir, became the seminary and metropolitan seat of this heresy:

and the Racovian catechism their confession of faith. The leading principle of the sect appears to be, that, “ what-

“ ever surpasses the limits of human comprehension
“ is to be excluded from the Christian profession.”

The mystery of the Trinity—the incarnation of the Son of God—and the deity of the Spirit—are therefore, consequently, utterly renounced in their creed. Respecting the article of baptism, they admitted only adults; and re-baptised those who joined them from other communions. They were considerably divided among themselves; and though they made many zealous efforts from Racow, to spread their tenets into other countries, they met with very little success, being every where watched with a jealous eye, and often punished by both Lutherans and Calvinists, as well as committed to the inquisition, under the Roman pale.

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It is observable that some of the most zealous disciples of Socinianism were physicians, as Servetus, whose fate is well known; and whose turbulent spirit brought him to his untimely end, inexcusable as the instruments were who imbrued their hands in his blood.

AN. 1563. Blandrata, another physician, sent into Transylvania at the request of Prince Sigismund, laboured with equal zeal and more success; and with his associates spread their opinions, and procured a peaceable establishment, and open profession of their faith there, to this day. Though their numbers have not been great in any place, they have maintained an existence, and in the declensions of pure Christianity, have gained proselytes in countries into which at first they found no admission; as in England; where an effort, though with no great success, has been made to revive the Unitarian and Socinian notions with some deviations from their original. The indifference to all religion, has permitted them peaceably to exist; at the same time, that it hath been unfavourable to their progress; as these opinions suit not the multitude, and the few who chuse to be free-thinkers, and treat revelation cavalierly, rather prefer to make no profession of Christianity at all.

The peaceableness of the Socinian principles, which in their most ancient catechism, forbid oaths,

or the resistance of injury or oppression, made them much less observable than the sect of the *Anabaptists*, with which they were often classed, because of their coincidence in the point of baptism, however different in other particulars. These last indeed excited the greatest disturbances, required the strong arm of power to subdue them, and brought upon themselves the heaviest censures of the reformed, whether Lutherans or Calvinists.

Amidst the agitations of those days, arose this sect; presuming to found a new Church, in which every member should be a true and real saint; and their leaders, under a sure divine impulse, and armed with miraculous powers against all opposition. Under Muntzer, Stubner Stork, and John of Leyden, a tumultuous multitude declared war against all magistracy, and proposed to erect a new *christocracy*, in which they expected the Saviour himself personally to appear, and to rule the nations by them and their followers. The first inundation was swept away as above recorded, and the leaders destroyed. But the sect subsisted, and continued to disseminate the same hopes, and to make the same pretensions. Not that all who were included in the name, were alike turbulent in their principles, or fanatic in their expectations. Many of them appear to be persons of real piety, seduced by the hope of a purer and better state of the Christian Church; and only held in common with the rest, the necessity
of

of adult baptism, by immersion. The different countries where they spread, concurred in exerting every means of suppressing them; and abstained not from cruelties, which disgraced the Christian name; and which, as hath been often proved, the constancy and intrepidity of the sufferers, braving the savageness of their persecutors, turned to the credit and advancement of their cause. The magistrate absurdly involved all who bore the name of Anabaptist in the same criminality; however harmless the visionary hopes of many were, compared with the errors and turbulence of others. And because an *incurable heretic* in the eye of a protestant, as well as a papist, was still an object for the sword and coercion of the established government, they suffered severely; so inadequately was true Christian liberty yet understood.

On the destruction of Munster, with its taylor king, and the dispersion of those who escaped the fury of their enemies, the fugitives persecuted in every place, were reduced very low, and saw the extinction of their sect approaching: when Menno, a Friesslander, who had been a popish priest, and, as he owns, a notoriously wicked man, was by frequenting their assembly reclaimed; and being a person of singular abilities, joined the society, and became their chief. His indefatigable labours from Holland to Livonia, amidst innumerable dangers, greatly increased the number

number of his followers. The gentleness of his spirit; the piety of his conduct, the power of his preaching; and his unwearied zeal, gave weight to his advice. His wisdom also removed the most objectionable parts of the Anabaptist tenets, and moulded them into a consistence, far less offensive to the rest of their Christian brethren. He retained still some of the particular doctrines of the sect, respecting baptism—the millenium—the unlawfulness of war—and of oaths—and the exclusion of all magistracy from their communion—but he condemned all their past turbulence, polygamy, and pretences to inspiration: recommending the greatest peaceableness of conduct, even to non-resistance, and the strictest purity of morals, without which none were to be admitted, or abide in their communion. Under so prudent a leader, the society established order, and obtained respectability. Divisions among themselves indeed greatly weakened their cause; which all Menno's prudence could not appease. A rigid sect arose affecting peculiar strictness of discipline, and hurling excommunications against their brethren on the slightest occasions. This produced a separation into the rigid and moderate Anabaptists, and endless debates of too little consequence to dwell upon.

In Holland, under that great friend of liberty, William Prince of Orange, they obtained a peaceable settlement, and liberty of conscience; having
generously

generously assisted him with money in a great emergence. From thence they are supposed to have migrated to England. But those who have settled with us, differ still much from the ancient and modern Mennonites; and more among themselves: for holding as the distinguishing feature of their party, the article of baptism, nothing can be more remote from each other than the *general* baptists, who have embraced the Arminian tenets, and the *particular* Baptists, who strongly adhere to those of Calvin, and the reformed churches. And of these latter, a great difference remains betwixt those who admit mixed communion, and those who refuse it to any but their own peculiar sect. A few also observe the Jewish sabbath, as their day of worship, in preference to the Lord's-day, and are termed *seventh day Baptists*.

When I have ranked the first Anabaptists under the head of heterodox, with their fanatical opinions, I wish by no means to be understood as comprehending the Mennonites, or modern congregations of Baptists, on any line with the Socinian and Arian heresy; far otherwise. After Menno had purged this denomination from the most exceptionable tenets, I have no doubt, that many of his followers and himself deserve a name in the Church of the living God, and were as true and real members of Christ's body, as the excellent in the reformed and Lutheran churches. And whoever candidly weighs
their

their doctrines and practices in the present day must allot them a place among the faithful, as a general body, notwithstanding their tenaciousness on the point of baptism. Indeed in all other things they seem very nearly united with their reformed brethren, respecting the fundamental articles of the Christian faith : are exemplary in their zeal to promote the salvation of souls by Jesus Christ ; and exhibit respectable specimens of those who walk so, as we have Christ for an example. Through the weakness of our intellect, and the infirmity of the flesh, it is not the lot of mortals to be of one mind, nor of real Christians to form a compleat system of unity of opinion. But one thing *they* desire to do, to hold the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace : and to be of one heart, where they are not perfectly joined in the same sentiments. And though they occupy separate communions, and assemble not in the same places, or with the same forms of worship, yet all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, will love one another out of a pure heart fervently. In a better world we shall be still more closely united, and be one fold under one Shepherd. How should this prospect and hope mortify the spirit of prejudice and bigotry in every heart, and lead us to greater enlargement and mutual forbearance !

END OF VOL. II.



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